A HISTORY OF THE FLORENTINE REPUBLIC: AND OF THE AGE AND RULE OF THE MEDICI.

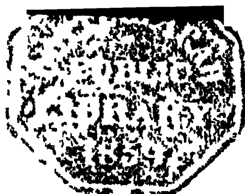
BY

LORENZO L. DA PONTE,
PROFESSOR OF ITAL. LIT. IN THE UNIVERSITY OF
THE CITY OF NEW-YORK.

VOL. II.

NEW-YORK:
COLLINS AND HANNAY.
W. E. DEAN, PRINTER.

1833.



HISTORY

OF

THE AGE AND RULE

OF

THE MEDICI.

CHAPTER I.

Revolutions in the Form of Government.—Death of Cosmo.—Succession of Piero.—Factions in Florence.—Success of the Medicean Party.—Death of Piero.—Lorenzo and Julian succeed.—Election of Sixtus IV. to the Papacy.—Death of the Duke of Milan.

THE final subversion of the liberties of Florence belongs to an era of prodigies. The empire of the East, which had so long outlived its more illustrious predecessor, and which had seemed to survive amid the decay, and even in the annihilation, of its vital powers, had bowed its head at last; the pontifical power, too, about to lose its influence over the destinies of distant nations, now began to acquire an unwonted authority within its own territory and through all the states of Italy; converting its spiritual supremacy into a more firmly established temporal sovereignty; the long-divided cities of Italy now seemed united in a common cause, or stricken with a common horror; and a feeling of some strange change about to succeed, or in the very moment of accomplishment, appeared to hold the minds of men in an unusual suspense of wonder, of expectation, and of awe. In Spain the dominion of the

Moors was about to yield its last hold; and the yearning spirit of the age, unsatisfied at length with the limits in which it had been confined for upwards of four thousand years, was stretching in visionary hope to the distant regions that lay beyond the waters, which were now to shut out but for a short time the war and conflict-worn children of the eastern continent from the freedom that belonged to the wild hills or untrodden savannas of the West.

In the midst of an era teeming with such events, on the very confines of that profound revolution which separated one portion of the world's history from the other, and which, since the great flood, has had but one parallel, dividing the chronicles of the earth and all its kingdoms into the ancient, the middle, and the modern; at this imposing crisis, the light of freedom was extinguished in Florence. It had, however, done its part; and all the world had from its flame received at least some spark to spread still wider yet the everlasting fire.

A slight observation of the condition of the states of Italy will place us at that point of our narrative at which it was interrupted by the important revolution in the East. The endeavour of the holy pontiff, who, trembling for the throne which he occupied, would now, too late, have armed again the chivalry of Europe in a new crusade, had succeeded at least in effecting the pacification of Italy. Sforza had exhausted the treasury which had furnished his forces; the terror of Mahomet seconded the instances of the church in the senate of Venice; and the ambition of Naples, left single-handed to contend with the strength of its enemies in the midst of their territory, was compelled, however reluctantly, to retire from the field. Scarcely had Nicholas succeeded in effecting the desired peace of the peninsula, when, worn out with his labours, he left the chair to Calistus III. who in 1454 assumed the papal sovereignty. At the same moment

it appeared that the peace of Italy was still more certainly secured by the union of the house of Calabria with the recent ducal family of Milan, in the marriage of Alfonzo, son of the Calabrian Ferdinand, with the daughter of Sforza. Thus did all the states of Italy sink into the temporary and precarious peace of slavery.

The return to the affairs of Florence presents a melancholy spectacle. Neri Capponi had died, and left without a competitor the heartless ambition of Cosimo to prey upon the defenceless fortunes of his country. The liberties of Florence were now no longer dear to her citizens, but the safety of their persons and property was still in their own keeping; and if they thought but little of the principles on which the republican institutions of their earlier days had been founded, they were still unprepared to dispossess themselves of the long-exercised power which had made them the guardians of their own interests and rights. The ancient form of election was again desired by the adherents of Cosimo, who had grown weary or jealous of his power; they proposed the renewal of the *imborsations*, and the people were gratified at obtaining this superficial testimony of their influence. But Cosimo, against whose authority this reform was designed, to the mortification of his enemies lost nothing by the change. The people still made him their idol; and, in denying themselves the right of succession by nomination to office, in the capacity of his friends the disaffected relieved him of the necessity of guiding himself in part by their counsels, and of being governed in some measure by the consideration of their interests. When, however, Cosimo had thus obtained his release from a thraldom that might have proved not easy to remove, and presented himself as the advocate of the people by sustaining the introduction of the *imborsations* against those by whom it had been effected, but who, disappointed in its effect, would now gladly have

returned to the less republican form—after he had thus secured the utter extinction of that party which had ventured to oppose his desires and endanger his interests, he then began himself to desire the substitution of a form that might suit the altered character of the times; that might accustom the populace to look without interest on the assumption of their former privileges by an irresponsible magistrate; and that should, in fine, acknowledge the triumph of his interest over the public immunities. Luca Pitti was this year Gonfalonier, and upon him the sagacity of Cosimo settled as the instrument of his ambition

At the moment of tranquillity, greater, perhaps, than had been known for many years to Florence, it was proposed to the magistracy to take from the people their newly recovered right, which they had exercised with all moderation. Girolamo Macchiavelli, exasperated at the impudence of the proposal, declared that nothing but the most restless ambition could have prompted its mover. Not even a shadow of difficulty or disturbance, he continued, had marked this exercise of popular power. "What reason then for this proposal? Why introduce with this change a firebrand of discord into a peaceful and united city? I ask not," said he, "a reply; the motives for this change are the ambition and pride of those who propose it." This speech of the bold republican was unfortunately the impulse of a spirit that had outlived its age. Macchiavelli was seized as a traitor, and condemned to the rack. In the dismay which this outrage threw among the few who dared to think as he, the friends of Cosimo assembled the people; the government was new-modelled, and the last remaining exercise of the republican institutions was destroyed by the abrogation of even the republican forms. The rights of the people thus transferred to the government, which became by this means, the sovereignty, instead of that which government is naturally intended to be, the organ, namely, of the

sovereignty; efficient measures were taken for removing all possibility of danger, or even of opposition, to the newly-established order of things. Fourteen citizens were banished from the territory of the dominion which still called itself a republic, for their devotion to the republican institutions still remaining in the great wreck of their country's liberties; and these, in all the vast population that wealth and commerce, and enterprize and good government had collected within the walls of Florence, were the only ones who were found to raise their voices in favour of the principles which had given her these exalting advantages. Among the fourteen, the most odious in the eyes of the now established tyranny, was Girolamo Macchiavelli; and it was the satisfaction of hate and vanity, which, when he broke the limits of his place of exile, condemned him to an ignominious death.

Among the changes introduced with this revolution, it was thought expedient to give in name to the people that which had been taken from them in substance. The ancient priors of the arts were henceforward to be denominated Priors of Liberty. In the meanwhile new disturbances broke out in the South; the crown of Naples became again the prize for which the houses of France and Aragon were to contend upon the soil of Italy. Florence was solicited to take part in the contest; but wiser now for the security of her new masters, than she had been before for the prosperity of her citizens and preservation of their liberties, she resolved to keep her neutral position. Untouched in the interests for which she had been contented to see her ancient institutions overthrown, she reposed in absolute quiet, while the friends of Cosimo proceeded to develope the system which they had resolved to introduce. Precedence in rank became now a matter of importance to magistrates who no longer possessed the dignity with which the delegated sovereignty of the people had invested them. The creatures of Cosimo,

they now required outward show to supply the loss to which they themselves had consented; but the tyranny which was thus being established for the inheritance of Cosimo's posterity, rendered these movements imperative. Luca Pitti was still the agent of the Medici in every measure for the concentration of their power; while the head of that family had declined in vigour and in strength as he declined in years. All the evil of the last days of his long course of alternate violence, hypocrisy, and fraud, was perpetrated under show alone of his authority; but the active tyrant of Florence was now his creature Pitti. Covetousness, malice, innate ferocity, prompted his every action; yet still those actions, performed under colour of the advancement of Cosimo's authority, or in the accomplishment of his will, did, by accustoming the minds of the people to this paramount authority, tend in effect to confirm it. At the same time Pitti ruled in Florence; and though he governed in the name of Cosimo, it was in fact without the least subjection to his counsels. Yet the miserable vanity of this man's ambition was pleased with the tribute thus paid to his influence; and, wanting all energy to act or to direct, in the imbecility of his dotage he gloated on the blood that was shed in his name as a testimonial of his power—a power which he no longer knew even how to abuse, but which became a scourge in the hands of his unprincipled adherents.

The ferocious Pitti was nothing without the still authoritative name of Cosimo, but Cosimo was nothing for himself;—all the hoarded power for which his life had been spent in peril and in the meanness of guilt, availed him nothing now but to build up the fortunes of those who made his name and his influence a covering for the advancement of their own interests and a sanction for crime. In the excitement of political opposition, Cosimo had rarely been able to reflect on the sorrows that awaited his age. It does indeed

appear, that the character of the family to which he belonged peculiarly fitted its members for the infamous work which it had been the fate of Cosimo to accomplish. The callous heart and the contracted soul had little need of the habit of evil-thinking and evil-doing to case them against the visitings of conscience, and retributive justice would in vain have delegated to that agent the infliction of its punishment. Still, the old age of Cosimo was visited with bitter affliction. He had lived a life of labour and care for the acquisition of power and of dignity not known to the republican institutions of his country. With him the authority which he sought was the end of his labours; and wherever such is the case, where influence is contended for not as a means, it is desired for the gratification of vanity alone, and cannot command the sympathy of the reflecting mind. When Cosimo contemplated the fabric which he had reared, he turned with anxious regard to his children, and leaned upon the hope that something of himself would still survive in them to wear the dignity, which appeared to him as nothing if he could foresee its termination in his family. Giovanni and Piero had both been educated in the school of their father; but Piero was indolent of habit, and infirm of health and of purpose. Giovanni was therefore the hope to which the vanity of his father was directed for the perpetuation of his name and influence. In the decline of his energies he looked to the certainty of Giovanni's succession; but with all his infirmities he was destined to survive this son, the object of his vanity as much as of his love.

On the melancholy decease of this his favourite son, Cosimo received the condolence of the most illustrious persons of his age. The father of the church addressed the language of consolation to the bereaved parent and disappointed prince; but he knew that he had lived his day, and the power about to pass from his name appeared almost a mockery while it remained, he

could not be soothed by that which acknowledged his own elevation to remind him that his fortunes had

"Placed a barren sceptre in his grasp;"

and when he beheld the feeble frame of his remaining son, and the children of that child each moment, perhaps, to be orphans; when he looked at the structure which his pride had built up, in which, in regal pomp he wanted but the regal name, the old man felt that he had laboured in vain; and, broken in spirit, if not contrite in heart, he looked with melancholy forebodings on the palace of his pride, and owned that *all is vanity*. "These walls are too wide for those whom I shall leave to occupy them," said he, as he paced through the spacious halls of his dwelling.

The children for whom he thus desponded were Julian and the magnificent Lorenzo. They were destined to rivet the last chains of Florence; but even in them, in the apprehension of their fate was accomplished the punishment of Cosimo's treason to the rights of liberty and human kind. In this apprehension he died, unsatisfied in his desires, and in doubt of that rule which he had established, beyond hope for the citizens indeed, but not beyond anxiety for the hours of his last illness and the moment of his death.

If the character of Cosimo be not now familiar to the reader, it can avail but little to sum up the good and evil of his life; the former, if any, mingled with his repulsive vices, was all directed to the aid of his guilty purposes; in his liberality, the ostentation of vanity may have borne a part; but the establishment of a dangerous popularity, as it was the consequence, was also most probably the design; the protection of letters secured to his interest the powerful minds of those who were engaged in their cultivation; but had no selfish motives mingled with his liberality, had the admiration of genius alone induced the patronage which he extended to its exercise, we may acknowledge that

something of virtue is as inseparable as something of weakness and vice from the organization of man: but the name of Cosimo is that of the first tyrant of Florence—the first for whom the republican institutions of the only republic of Italy were sacrificed; and it seems not idle, only because it is monstrous, to compare the single traits of goodness that distinguish his character and his course, with that one atrocity which in itself implies the concentration of every thing that sympathy with virtue and with manly dignity rejects. Servility, however, erected his monument; and when, from one end of Europe to the other, the principles of liberty were extinct; when it became noble ambition to despise the name of citizen, and to the sacred name of prince or king were yielded up the bounds of right and wrong; all Europe then received his epitaph, and sanctioned his crimes by conferring on him the prostituted title of *Pater Patriæ.*

We may not be willing to concede to Cosimo the possession of that elevation of character which is necessary in the absence of high intellectual characteristics to confer upon an individual the epithet of *the great*; yet no one will deny the greatness of the name which he has left to posterity. For the thirty years preceding his death, Italy had been accustomed to look upon him as one of her most illustrious sons; in his popularity at Florence, Neri Capponi alone could stand for a moment beside him. In the states of Lombardy, Sforza had obtained a reputation still more brilliant, but scarcely less extensive, and an admiration scarcely less profound. During the lives of these had flourished and fallen a number of characters, which divided the wonder of their age, but which have been unable to contend with them in posthumous fame—Piccinino, Albizzi, and Filippo Maria Visconti; unless we be willing to designate by that name the infamous notoriety of the latter. A new generation was now to appear upon the scene, and almost at the same moment, with

Cosimo, the last illustrious survivors of the great revolutions which they had seen and caused, Sforza and Capponi, were removed from the theatre of their exploits, their virtues, or their crimes. The era of Cosimo and his contemporaries is, perhaps, unsurpassed by any in Italian history, for the number of illustrious names by which it is signalized at least, if not adorned. To Francesco Sforza succeeded his son Galiazzo; to Alphonso, Ferdinand; and to Cosimo de' Medici, the sickly Piero. If we would justly estimate the value to Florence of the insidious munificence of the Medici, we have but to examine what were the opportunities at this moment afforded for the re-assertion of the Florentine liberty. From this examination, we are to look upon Florence herself; we are to behold the feebleness of her efforts in behalf of the proffered emancipation, to see her falling into the arms of a despotism which had lost all power of coercion; and, if we can, we may then unite in the praises which the affectation of literature bestows on the corruption of public virtue and the betrayal of human liberty.*

There was no one who expected that the succession of Piero to the fortune of his father, would enable him to assume at the same time the quiet and undisputed succession to the little less than sovereignty enjoyed by Cosimo. The prudent father had himself been solicitous for the fate of his house, and had endeavoured by the same means which he had found successful in

* "If, from considering the private character of Cosimo, we attend to his conduct as the moderator and director of the Florentine republic, our admiration of his abilities will increase with the extent of the theatre upon which he had to act. With whatever difficulties Cosimo had to encounter, at home or abroad, they generally terminated in the acquisition of additional honour to his country and to himself. The esteem and gratitude of his fellow-citizens were fully shewn a short time before his death, when by a public decree he was honoured with the title of *Pater Patriæ*, an appellation which was inscribed on his tomb, and which, as it was founded on real merit, has ever since been attached to the name of Cosimo de' Medici."—*Roscoe.*

the corruption of the population at large, to secure to his son the affection of those who might be proper instruments in his hands for retaining the people in servitude. Here, however, the sagacity of the old politician deserted him. It is not by remembered favours, but by hope of new ones, that the interested are to be held. Those, therefore, on whom he himself had expended his treasures, and whose faith to their country he had proved to be venal, should not have been trusted with the fortunes of his son.

Diotisalvi Neroni had been the creature of Cosimo, and for many years of his long life of hypocrisy acquainted with his traffic in all kinds of merchandize, among which the liberties of his country had been considered and held by him to differ from nothing else which might be valued in money and purchased for a price. To this man's care the last advice of the expiring father consigned the affairs of his son; and the easily extorted promise, that the same obsequiousness which had waited on his own gradual elevation should also attend the inherited state of his successor, convinced the dying parent that he had found a faithful guardian for his house. In obedience to the express desire of Cosimo, Piero abandoned not only the direction, in a great measure, of public affairs, but even the management of his private concerns, to the trusted care of Diotisalvi.

There is, perhaps, no parallel in history of a people, proud and enlightened as the Florentines, having lost their freedom with so feeble a struggle as that which marked the usurpation of the Medici. For many generations that family, as we have seen, had been constantly before the eyes of the people, and daily increasing in popularity; yet from the first we scarcely distinguish one of its members endowed with those qualities which have usually been considered necessary for the acquisition of that popular favour which makes a people willing to entrust their cherished privileges to the

keeping of an individual, and to adopt his will for law No dazzling achievement recommends them to the vulgar enthusiasm; and we may sympathize the less with the misfortunes of that people, whose rights were sacrificed, not by a generous error in the noble admiration of intellectual power, courage, or self-devotion, but to the basest motives of sordid interest. The reader of the preceding pages cannot deceive himself into a supposition that the Florentines were conquered by their oppressors; he is compelled to the acknowledgment that they were purchased by the Medici and sold by themselves. Yet Cosimo, with all his incalculable resources, had not been able to obtain this object of his ambition without an expenditure of capital that even he could scarcely bear, and that might render the inheritance of his successor an uncertain possession. To secure the affection or the dependence of the people at home, he had been compelled to render almost every man in Florence his debtor by extensive loans, which the borrowers might almost consider in the light of a benevolence; and to secure that influence in foreign courts which we have seen to have been of such avail to him in time of need, and which servile generations have cited as evidence of respect for his person and character, he had been obliged to stretch to the utmost the resources of his mind, fertile in all the expedients of commerce. In Naples, so vast had been the commercial relations of his house, that the calling in of his credits from that kingdom had deprived the crown of the ability to carry on the war in which it had leagued with the Venetian senate against Florence. Even England in her civil wars may be said to have received her monarch from his hand, inasmuch as the victories of Edward, which gave its temporary advantage to the house of York, were obtained by means of funds supplied from his exhaustless stores. The energy of his character, however, in the mingled relations of broker and politician, bore up against the continual

demands upon his resources; and the influence of his name, thus important in the eyes of so many who felt their dependence on his forbearance or his further bounty, required at last very little aid from his somewhat disordered though not diminished means

With his son it was in every particular the reverse Piero enjoyed but little reputation, except as the successor of Cosimo. His inferiority had, with an unaccountable imprudence, been revealed by the preference openly manifested by the father for his younger son Giovanni; and many of the same arts to which Cosimo had resorted in his youth, seemed necessary to secure to Piero the advantages which his predecessor had hoped to bequeath to him. All the wiles of the politician, the deceitful generosity, which, without diminishing his store, should seem to give, and which might indeed require the possession of, available funds, were now to be put again in exercise; but the part of the merchant was to be enacted also for the accumulation of the means to be thus treacherously used, and the derangement of the commercial affairs of the Medici appeared to render the reconciliation of these opposing difficulties impracticable.

At this moment, had the spirit of liberty awakened the regeneration of Florence was secure; but that spirit had been destroyed; pomp, pedantry, and vanity, had blinded the sons of Florence to its extinction; and the venal intrigues of avarice, or the narrow practices of ambition, appeared in all the efforts which were made to overthrow the feeble despotism that one united struggle for freedom would have crushed. The peculiar embarrassment of the situation in which the successor of Cosimo now found himself, suggested to Neroni the means of destroying his credit, and reducing him to the necessity of abandoning those hopes which his father had left him as a legacy, no less valuable than the countless treasures by which they had been begotten, and by which they were yet to be more fully

realized. He placed before the terrified merchant an account of his affairs, from which it seemed that the prosperity of his house was about to fail for want of large supplies of money to meet the extensive demands of its correspondents. While Piero trembled at the possible ruin of all that had seemed the basis of his power, the artful secretary placed before him the available credits on his books, and pointed to them as a means of restoring the shattered condition of his business. He advised him to call in the vast sums which, at a trifling interest, had been loaned by his father to the citizens, and which had been intended to bear a premium not of a mercantile nature. The insidious counsel was adopted by Piero, and all the debtors of the father were summoned to refund the amount of their loans to his successor. No sooner had the result of this measure answered the expectation of Neroni, in exciting against Piero a popular clamour, than numbers, whom a diversity of causes had arrayed against the family of the Medici, began now in concert to devise its overthrow. With Diotisalvi Neroni, the most active and zealous were Luca Pitti, Nicolo Soderini, and Agnolo Acciajuoli. Of these, the second had rendered himself too notorious as the accomplice of Cosimo's ambition, and as the cruel agent of his tyranny, to excite the public sympathy in behalf of any revolution in which he should appear as a leader If not equally noted for crime, Neroni was not less conspicuous as the confidential friend of Cosimo, and as the depository of his most secret views; and Acciajuoli, it was well understood, had long been waiting for an opportunity of gratifying a private pique against Cosimo and his family. Soderini alone, in this conspiracy, appeared without suspicion in the attempt to revolutionize the state. The first result of Neroni's advice was not long in revealing to Piero the motive by which it had been dictated. Several respectable houses having paid, at his unexpected demand, the amounts which they had

borrowed from his father, and which, invested at a moderate interest, it was thought would never be demanded, were soon afterwards obliged to fail, and the credit of the city was thus shaken in the eyes of foreign merchants and of its own inhabitants. Unsparing in their reproaches, they cried aloud that Piero had resolved the ruin of his country; and they pretended to see, in the approaching nuptials of his son Lorenzo, a manifest reaching after the interdicted honours of royalty. "Cosimo," said they, "was satisfied with a wife from among the daughters of his fellow-citizens; and for his son, he looked not beyond the walls of his native city. The pride of Piero seeks, on the contrary, a princely union with the aspiring house of Orsini, and will not be satisfied till it mingles with patrician blood."

While the minds of the people were thus prepared for a conflict, the foreign relations of the government were about to afford a ground for a formal distinction of parties. It had been a part of the treaty between Florence, or rather between Cosimo and the duke of Milan, that an annual sum should be provided by the Florentines, and paid over to the duke for the expenses incurred by him in the wars which he had conducted, or might be called upon to conduct, for the league opposed to the Venetian aristocracy and the Neapolitan throne. A division of parties now occurred on the question of continuing this contribution to the successor of Francesco Sforza, to whom it had been pledged. Those whom the representations of the conspirators had excited against the family of the Medici, together with the conspirators themselves, contended that the tribute thus claimed had been paid, and if continued would be still paid, for the purpose of aiding the ambitious projects of the Medici; that Francesco Sforza had been much more the support of Cosimo than the ally of Florence; and that Piero was now seeking to purchase in the same manner with the people's money

a mercenary aid in his plot against the people's liberties. They urged, moreover, that now was the moment for relieving themselves from an oppressive and degrading imposition, and at the same time for depriving those who might be meditating anything against the public safety of an assistance that might prove dangerous to the city's freedom. They supported their opinion by declaring that the contribution which had been levied for the purpose of securing the services of Sforza, if even those services had been required by the exigencies of the state, had been intended for that prince, and paid into his coffers in consideration of the influence of his talent and his name, and not in his capacity of duke of Milan; that thus it had been paid to a soldier of Florence, engaged, as many other sovereign princes had been, in her service; but that if the Florentines had been deceived into the levying of a tax for the duke of Milan, they had then rendered themselves in all respects the tributaries of his government. To these arguments the friends of Piero could make but a shallow reply. They endeavoured to show that the very inferiority of Galeazzo to his father, which had been assumed as a reason for withholding the contribution, was, in fact, the most powerful argument in favour of its continuance, inasmuch as it afforded new reason to fear the encroachments of Venice on the side of Lombardy. The parties thus in opposition to each other were yet to be designated by titles that should indicate their hostility; and as the revolutionists assumed the name of *Mountaineers*, from the residence of Luca Pitti by the monte San Giorgio, the friends of the Medici were called the party of the *Plain*. Nightly meetings were now held on both sides, and numbers of those, whom zeal for the ancient government, or habitual affection for the old institutions, or more unworthy motives attached to the interests of Piero's enemies, attended these meetings in throngs, solicitous to add their names to the long list of those who had pledged

themselves to redeem their country from the disgraceful enthralment into which it had fallen. A fatal division of sentiment, however, interfered, to arrest, and, indeed, to prevent, the fall of the feeble usurper.* Many were of opinion that, as the period for which the Balia had been created was about to expire, it was unwise to resort to violence; that Piero's influence was not sufficient to obtain its renewal against the public wish; that upon its expiration the ancient order of things would necessarily supervene; and that the distraction of the affairs of Piero in his commercial relations thus secured the ruin of his family, built up as it had been on the basis of wealth, and supported by an insidious but unlimited munificence. The opposite party of the faction rejected the timidity of this advice. They insisted that the only security against the high-reaching ambition of Piero, who wanted nothing of his father's desires however he might be destitute of his talents, depended on his death; while the general excitement against his person rendered this measure no less safe than expeditious and certain.

The citizens had long ceased to be governed by those principles which had formerly assured them the victory in every contest for liberty; and it is not to be doubted that the greater number of those who now desired the downfall of the Medici, were impelled by personal rather than public feeling; every thing, therefore, gave way to the savage desire of glutting a long-repressed hatred with blood; and the strength of those who clamoured for a resort to force, outweighed by a great majority the prudent and more disinterested opinion of those who, as they desired but the public good, were willing to sacrifice all personal resentment to its attainment.

It was however agreed to await the drawing of the new *Signoria* at the expiration of the term of the existing Balia, and then to proceed according as the lot should chance to return a Signory opposed to the Me-

dici or in favour of their interests. In the midst of the best hopes that the general eagerness for the subversion of Piero's tyranny had begun to excite, the usual difficulties attending all secret combinations which require time and forbearance, arose to thwart the almost accomplished undertaking. Even those who had been chosen to the most honourable offices in the conspiracy, began to calculate the advantage which they might derive from betraying it. Niccolo Fedini had been selected as secretary to the conspirators, and the long list of Piero's enemies, who had subscribed to his sentence of deposition or death, was in his hands. The tempting offer of a successful treachery was too powerful for his virtue; with this list he resolved to secure the favour of the intended victim, who, if he should escape, became at once a sovereign; and, in the determination of thus securing his own fortune, he applied for admittance at the gates of the palace of the Medici. It is not known what terms the traitor was able to make with Piero; but it is probable that he did not lightly tax the terror which he had thus been able to arouse.

Piero had rested almost as certain of the power which his father had transmitted, in his name, as though it had been a legal inheritance; he started, therefore, at the extent of the danger by which he found himself thus suddenly environed, and, shaking off his habitual lethargy, prepared for a contest with his adversaries. With the aid of Fedini he prepared new lists, and inviting all those whose motives in signing the resolutions against him might be questionable, he succeeded in collecting a no less formidable array of names in his support; among which, as Fedini had calculated, were not a few who, from feelings that had no sympathy with patriotism or principle, appeared on the catalogue of his opponents.

While these preparations were in diligent prosecution upon either side, the moment arrived for the choice

of the new magistracy. The fortune of the lot presented Niccolo Soderini as Gonfalonier. A universal burst of joy, upon the annunciation of this event, proclaimed the intensity with which the people had watched the decision of the umpire to which they had confided their political destinies. Soderini was known as the friend of the city's charter, and as the zealous opponent of the Medicean usurpation. His path through the streets of the city, on his way to receive the dignity to which he had been elected, was a triumphal procession; the most respectable citizens joined with the mob in the loudest demonstrations of joy, and, placing a crown of laurel on his head, invited him to secure the restoration of their country. Those who even still reverenced the memory of Cosimo de' Medici, and believed in the honesty of his intentions, by joining in the triumph of the republican party, showed to the trembling tyrant who had succeeded to the wily politician, that all his means of corruption, and all the terror of his name, had bought but the lips of his countrymen, that their hearts were with the buried liberties of the republic.

The brother of Soderini, however, who as far surpassed him in ability as he yielded to him in moral dignity, had united his fortunes to those of the Medici. He had foreseen that the love of liberty in the hearts of his countrymen was now a weaker passion than the love of peace or the desire of profit; and that, however for a moment they might yield to the generous impulse of the one, they were certain to be governed at last by the cold calculations of the other. Undeceived, therefore, by the universal cry that welcomed the election of his brother, and unmoved by the general enthusiasm for the restoration of the popular power, Thomas Soderini betook himself to the task of overreaching the simple honesty of Niccolo; and, careless of the fame with which his brother might have descended among the most illustrious champions of freedom in the pages

of his country's history, he bent all the power of his subtle mind to lead him to the disappointment of the hopes which had hailed him as the deliverer of his country, the restorer of her rights, and the redeemer of her children. Unfortunately Niccolo lent a too ready ear to the representations of this unprincipled counsellor. He was easily persuaded to believe that every thing had been obtained in his election, and that the acquiescence of all in the mode by which his elevation had been effected was a sufficient vindication of the old institutions. At the same time he was amused by his brother with various plans for the perpetuation of the newly-recovered equality; but while the time was thus consumed in idle projects for the future organization of the government, the moment arrived at which, having accomplished nothing of the many things which had been anticipated from his administration, the law required that he should lay down the ensigns of office, and summon the people again to the exercise of their sovereignty in the choice of his successor. From a popularity with which no citizen had been before his time so honourably dignified, Soderini now sunk into the lowest contempt, and left his name as a proverb for imbecility.

It then became obvious that the fate of the parties between which Florence was divided must be decided by arms. Hercules, the brother of the duke Borso of Este, on invitation of the malcontents appeared on the confines of Pistoia at the head of 1300 horse, while the tyrants of Bologna and Milan embraced with eagerness the cause of the Medici. But Piero had learned in the family records of his ancestors to fight with surer weapons than the sword; and when, in the last despair of saving the country which he still ardently loved, the humbled Soderini called on Pitti and the rest of those on whom he had been accustomed to look as his coadjutors in the cause of the republic, he found himself deserted by all on whom he had depended for

aid. The victory of Piero was thus secured; Soderini, therefore, without attending the order which he knew must soon be issued for his banishment, departed into voluntary exile amid the vain regret that he had neglected the last fortunes of his country confided to his care, and little less than betrayed by his credulity.

The Signoria had preserved in all these differences a judicious neutrality; it now dispatched a commission to wait upon the victor without a compromise of independence, to obtain what concessions or what assurances it might from Piero's moderation. If for a moment the deputation permitted itself to employ the language of right and power, it was soon made sensible that Piero was now no longer willing to acknowledge any authority paramount to his own. After a brief interval, the formation of a new Balia confirmed the ascendancy of Piero, and carried still one degree farther the supremacy established by his father over the rights of the people and the majesty of the laws. Of all those who had conspired against his government, Luca Pitti was the only individual that escaped his resentment; an escape for which he was most probably indebted much less to the gratitude or the good faith of Piero than to the contempt with which he, in common with all his contemporaries, regarded the venal traitor.

In their banishment the Florentine exiles forgot nothing of the hostility which they had sworn against the oppressor of their native city. They flocked in numbers to Venice, whose jealousy of Florence was well known to them; and, calling to her recollection the alliance which had subsisted between the Medici and the Sforzas to the manifest disadvantage of her interests, they invited her aid for the purpose of humbling the family by which her pride had been more galled than even her interests had been shocked. By representations such as these, and by the not improbable assurances that their coming would be welcomed by the citizens with open arms, the exiles succeeded in

putting under arms a force of 8000 horse and 6000 foot, collected in the territory of the Venetian senate and of other authorities, under the command of Bartolommeo Colleone, the most respectable commander of that era in Italy.

Against Venice and her allies, Florence received in this conjuncture the aid of the tyrants of Naples and Milan; but a war undertaken without principle promised little of importance in its results, and the exiles by whom it had been excited, unable to maintain the promises which they had made to their allies of effecting a rising in their favour within the city, soon found themselves abandoned to the resentment of their exasperated enemies. It now became hopeless to resist the strength of the current on which the fortunes of Piero seemed to ride to undisputed sovereignty. All the chances which the feebleness of his constitution had seemed to offer for the reassertion of the ancient liberties had been seized by Lorenzo his son, and converted into a means of securing his father's authority. The deep intent and unrelenting will, concealed beneath a mask of pleasantry and gentleness, awoke no fears and excited no hatred in the minds of those whom he was marking for slavery; and a natural turn for the festivities peculiar to the age, and in which the Florentines more especially delighted, served to gain him the regard of all who could not or who did not care to look beyond the moment they themselves enjoyed; who troubled themselves little concerning the rights which they lost, atoned for as they were by the momentary enjoyments obtained; and who did not see that these pleasures, conferred as a favour, might, when no end remained to be answered, be suspended or totally withheld. Immediately after the establishment of peace, therefore, preparations were made for entertaining the people with tournaments and jousts; and the aspiring Lorenzo was foremost to venture his person, and to carry off the palm, in all the contests that belong to

such exhibitions. It was necessary to obtain a character with the populace; and the reputation of valour which might be acquired in these bloodless encounters, was attended with nothing of the danger to which a participation in even the not sanguinary battles of his country would have exposed him. There were, most probably, very few in Florence who would have chosen to be declared in these engagements the conqueror of the heir of Piero de' Medici. In the midst of such rejoicings the marriage of Lorenzo was solemnized with the patrician lady Clarice Orsini. This marriage had been severely reprobated by the opposition as an evidence of a too aspiring ambition on the part of the Medici; it is probable that the pride of Lorenzo was gratified in thus seducing the people into the celebration of that event, which might be considered the first manifest declaration of his invasion of their long-cherished equality. Certain it is that the nuptial pomp increased the splendour of the festivities, in which, for more than three months, the whole city had been made to participate, and for which not less than the preparation of five months had been required.

It is not improbable that the death of Piero, which was now hourly expected, might have opened again new opportunities to the few remaining individuals who clung in memory to the free institutions, the mere title and form of which still dignified Florence with the name of the Republic; had it not been that all those who belonged to that party, and who enjoyed the confidence of the people, were advanced in age, and that each day thinned the number of the venerable band. Nicolo Soderini perhaps alone had possessed in a sufficient degree that confidence to use it with a reasonable prospect of success; he, however, had suffered the occasion to pass, and with his death, which occurred some years after at Venice, it is certain that the strength of the old party of the republicans may be considered as extinct. A new generation may indeed

have supplied new members, but the utmost which was reserved for them was the attempt to shake off an established tyranny; the elder race alone could have supported the constitution of the ancient liberty. Notwithstanding his infirmities, therefore, Piero outlived the possibility of the restoration of the republic in outliving the most prominent of its advocates; and as he had been less guilty than Cosimo, so his death was less tormented by fears for the fate of his children. With all the faults of his nature, and it is hardly to speak too strongly to say with all the innate evil that belonged to his character as one of the Medici—as one of a family in which the meanness of vice appears to have been an inevitable inheritance, the son of Cosimo is not answerable for the enslavement of his country. There is reason even to believe, that, disgusted with the licentiousness of those who in the name of his party would have struck at the root of all social order and private right, Piero contemplated, in the possession of little less than sovereign power, the restoration of the exiles; which was, in fact, the same as an acknowledgment of their honesty and a recognition of their principles. With this view he had already conferred in private with Agnolo Acciajuoli, his capital enemy, and begun with him a treaty for the return of those who by his power had been banished, when, overtaken by a violent attack of his malady, he found his virtuous designs cut off by the rapid approach of his dissolution.

It has been the habit of most writers to decry the character of this member of the Medicean family. Apologists have, indeed, sometimes ventured to speak in his behalf; and it has been deemed a species of praise to account for his inferiority by the circumstance of his occupying so imposing a situation as that which intervened between the eras of men like his father and his son; as if, indeed, to have been less instrumental than they in the ruin of the most illustrious

and most glorious fabric of human wisdom,—the free constitution of an independent people,—were a subject of reproach. All that later ages have found to praise in Cosimo and Lorenzo is the love of literature and the arts; a love which extended to them, it must be allowed, an encouraging and efficient patronage. Yet if, indeed, the greater part of this were not an affectation, it cannot claim the praise of more than enlightened selfishness, refined by habit and the spirit of the age. And this, moreover, whatever may be the credit to which it should entitle Lorenzo and Cosimo, shone in Piero no less conspicuously; but Piero neither planned nor consummated the enslavement of his country; and servile Europe, accustomed to the virtue of loyalty alone, has found no language of encomium for his forbearance and moderation. The death of Piero, who had not yet reached his fifty-third year, occurred in the month of December, A. D. 1469, while Lorenzo and Julian were still in their nonage. No hopes, however, seem to have been formed on this account for the regeneration of the state, though many fears were entertained of new dangers from the facilities which it might afford to the ambitious and designing, of disturbing the dishonourable quiet which was now the first object of care to the degenerate citizens. While in this apprehension, the populace were looking with consternation on the transmission, to such youthful hands, of the vast authority of the Medici, Tommaso Soderini, who had been left as guardian, or at least as confidential counsellor, to the brothers, convened an assembly of the principal citizens, and laid before them a statement of the power and resources possessed by the Medici, inferring the utter hopelessness of any attempt to subvert their influence. When Soderini had made an end of his harangue, his pupil Lorenzo came forward to conciliate, if possible, the affections of those of whose actions and wills he already felt himself master. The assembly listened with attention to the youthful

orator; and even those, perhaps, who bore little affection to his person, were pleased at the indications which he gave of an ability to command, and to secure them tranquillity while he yet deprived them of power. So effectually, indeed, did he address himself to the interests of those by whom he was heard; so ably was his cause sustained by his adviser; and so desperate did they succeed in representing the hope of resistance or opposition; that scarcely a shadow of objection was made to the assumption, as if hereditary, by the children, of all the authority exercised by their father; and thus the constitution of the republic, which had been for three generations giving way before the insidious advances of the Medici, was annihilated in the fourth. At Florence not a single hostile movement attended this final change; and all her dependencies, now contented with their thraldom, imitated the example of her submission. A slight attempt of one Bernardo Nardi to excite the citizens of Prato with the cry of liberty against the degrading despotism of the Florentine merchants, but served to show how entirely that sound had ceased to find an echo in the breast of the Italians. Scarcely a single individual responded to the call; and the wretched Nardi, betrayed by those whom he would have saved, became the victim of their servility and of his own untimely patriotism. With the assistance of a few Florentines dwelling in Prato, the inhabitants possessed themselves of his person, and sending him a prisoner to Florence, gave him up as the first offering of blood to propitiate the tyranny which had invaded and desecrated the last sanctuary of liberty in Italy. It is needless to add that the sacrifice was accepted, and that the blood of Nardi was required to satisfy the outraged pride which now wielded the sceptre, even though it wore no crown and sat upon no throne. The apparatus of death, however, possessed no terrors for the firm republican; and to the interrogations of his judges he replied with a spirit that in the better days

of the commonwealth would have drawn the swords of a thousand freemen in his defence. "I came hither," said he, "to die. It was my wish to perish for Florence, and within her walls—to perish in the effort to signalize in her behalf—in the attempt to give her back to her glory, the last hour of the life of a republican."

Of all the historians of Florence during the age of the Medici, Macchiavelli is the most unvarying in his praise, though certainly not the most enthusiastic. Perhaps, indeed, we may discover in his commendation the disgust much rather which had closed his heart against all sympathy with the feelings and all compassion for the weakness of his countrymen, than a real admiration of the character of the Medici; nothing speaks more loudly or more distinctly in all his writings than the contempt with which he beheld the instability of purpose manifested in the political conduct of the Florentines during the latter period of the republican rule. With all the praises, however, which admiration of the Medici, or indignation at the conduct of his fellow-citizens, extorted from the lips of Macchiavelli, his sagacious and observant mind could not be misled in forming its judgment of the age, which had first submitted to the undisguised substitution of a despotism for the sovereignty of the laws. The observations of such a writer are the proper comment on the character of the times, and on the lives of those by whom that character had been fostered from the moment of its creation, and turned in its progress to the ruin of a happy and illustrious people.

"After this insurrection, which had been so suddenly raised and as soon suppressed," continues the impartial historian, alluding to the unfortunate attempt of Nardi, "the citizens of Florence began to sink into luxury and effeminacy, imagining they might indulge themselves with security in any sort of intemperance and excess, now the government was quietly settled

upon so good a foundation. From whence many of those evils and inconveniencies ensued, which are usually the attendants of a long peace For the youth growing more dissolute than ever they had been before, and having nothing else to do, threw away their time and estates in dress, in feasting, in gaming, and women, and such other dissipations. Their whole study and emulation was to surpass each other in fine clothes, in quaint expressions and repartees; and he was generally accounted the greatest wit, who was the most satirical. These follies and extravagancies were still increased by the arrival of the duke of Milan at Florence, whither he came about that time, attended by his duchess and all his court (to fulfil some vow, which, it was said he had made) and was received with all the magnificence and respect that were due to so powerful a prince, and so great a friend to the republic. It then happened to be the time of Lent; and though the eating of flesh meat in that season is strictly forbidden by the church, his courtiers made no scruple in feasting upon it every day, without any dispensation or the least regard either to the laws of God or man: a thing that was never seen in our city before. Amongst many other spectacles that were exhibited to shew him the greater honour, the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles was represented in the church of Santo Spirito: and as there was an infinite number of candles lighted up upon that occasion, the church, by some accident, took fire, and was burnt down to the ground; which many thought was a judgment upon the city; and that God, being offended, had inflicted that punishment upon it as a mark of his displeasure. In this state of corruption and dissolution of manners the duke found the city of Florence, and left it so much worse at his departure, that the more sober and considerate part of the administration thought it necessary to make a sumptuary law to restrain these exorbitancies in dress, in feastings, and other solemnities, and to

regulate the expences of their fellow-citizens on those occasions, in such a manner that they should not exceed the bounds of frugality and discretion."*

The year 1471 is interesting in Italian history for the death of Paul II. which made way for the succession of Sixtus IV. to the papacy. It had been the fate of Florence, as we have already witnessed, to be united in a league with the heads of the church, or rather to have acted as if in the strictest dependence upon their will. Occasional differences had for a moment separated their interests; but from the first quarrels of the Guelphs and the Ghibelines, in which the party of Rome had been so triumphantly sustained by the Florentines, to the moment when the fugitive Eugenius took sanctuary within her walls, the great republic of Italy must be ranked among the closest adherents of the papal despotism. The ambition of the prelate now called to hold the keys and the sword, in opposition to that of the new-risen sovereignty in Florence, effected at last a severance of that union which, perhaps, is answerable for the enslavement of the peninsula. This separation was of course too late to remedy the evils which the unnatural combination had induced; but the jealousies of the rival parties were productive of some of the most important and interesting events in the decline of the republic, or rather in the establishment of the empire of its oppressors.

After the suppression of the rising at Prato, Lorenzo appears to have considered the rule of his family as fixed on the firmest basis of power, and to have longed for an opportunity of exercising its prerogatives with a cruelty that did not belong to the character of his race. Perhaps, indeed, in few instances are the most wanton atrocities of irresponsible sovereignty the result so much of an innate fondness for blood, and of the pleasure to be derived from the spectacle of human suffering,

* Farneworth's Macchiavelli.

as of that craving vanity which seeks the continual acknowledgment of power, and is gratified by even the curses of the victims which attest its existence. Whatever then, in the present instance, may have been the principal motive—whether state expediency, or the excitement of anger, or the goadings of vanity,—Lorenzo was not displeased with the occasion that afforded him an opportunity of exercising the authority with which he found himself vested, and of trying, perhaps, how far its exercise would be endured.

Volterra had long acknowledged allegiance to Florence; and the habit of obedience on one side, and of command on the other, had converted the protection which the Volterrans had sought from the people of Florence, into an unqualified tyranny. Long after the inhabitants of the subject city had lost not only the hope, but, as it appears, the desire itself, of independence, they had still preserved many municipal rights identified with their pecuniary interests. On occasion of some dispute involving these interests, Lorenzo de' Medici had been chosen as umpire between the community as complainants, against the holders of a certain valuable monopoly supported by the delegated authorities of Florence. Impatient of delay, or uncertain, perhaps, of the faith with which Lorenzo might perform the office of judge, in a moment of excitement the Volterrans refused to attend his decision, and, without considering the impossibility of supporting their revolt, proceeded against the Florentine governors of their city. Immediately afterwards, restored to reflection, they were anxious to atone for their error, and despatching to Florence a deputation, they entreated to be allowed to resume their allegiance. Tommaso Soderini, with the timidity of his disposition, fearing the result, of a contest, to the interest which he had espoused, undertook to advocate their cause; but Lorenzo was fixed in his resolve, and the mandate was issued from his palace for the devastation of the un-

happy city. For a day and a night the slaughter of the citizens was permitted by the leader, whom the advice of Lorenzo had placed over the armies of the offended state. Lorenzo was, no doubt, secretly well pleased to strike, by this act of severity, a salutary terror of his displeasure to the breasts of his more immediate subjects, without the danger which would have attended such an exercise of his power among themselves. It is, therefore, more than probable that Frederic of Urbino, by whom the siege had been conducted, would scarcely have permitted the indiscriminate slaughter of the young and the old, of women and children, unless he had been possessed of the political secret which made such cruelty on his part a recommendation to the favour of the ruling dynasty at Florence.

The breach between the reigning party at Florence, or, in other words, between the Florentine government and the papal court, though not yet constituting an overt hostility, tended to form a new union of parties and interests among the principal states of Italy. In the north, the duke of Milan and the senate of the Venetian aristocracy had, from the first advances of Francesco Sforza towards the sovereign power which he ultimately acquired, considered each other natural enemies. Florence, united in the friendship of the Medici and the Sforzas to the side of Milan, had also excited the jealousy and the displeasure of Venice, the rather as the treaties which existed between the Florentines and the Turkish sultan, while that conqueror was daily subduing the dependencies of the senate in the Grecian seas, appeared to indicate the Tuscan city as a growing and dangerous rival, for commercial and naval supremacy, to the Adriatic queen. Here then was an insuperable barrier to a cordial alliance between these principal states, which, on the other hand, were forcibly thrown together with all their opposition of interests, by the unexpected direction of public af-

fairs in the South. The king of Naples was at this moment the most dangerous enemy within the Alps to the independence of the several states, that, having forfeited their civil liberty, still boasted their national freedom. Until the election of pope Sixtus, the influence of Venice in the councils of the church had kept the ambition of Naples in salutary check. With the decease of Paul, that check was removed, and nothing was found to interfere with the sincerity or the fervour of the league which Sixtus and Ferdinand opposed to the jealous union of the cities of the centre and the north. Thus prepared for conflict, but without a pretext for commencing it, all Italy was once again on the eve of a general convulsion; but how different are the interests for which we see her various states arrayed in the attitude of defiance and defence, from those which dignified, in the early portion of our history, the councils and the battles of the free cities, whose whole population moved in their wars, and which were never arrayed in the attitude of hostility without the impulse of a principle. Now the jealousy of individual power converted, or seemed at least about to convert, all Italy into a camp.

The history of all the nations of antiquity, compared with those of modern times, affords a lesson to those who, in the destruction of public liberty and the decline of public virtue, yet dwell upon the recollection of the better eras of their country's history, when the rights of humanity had not been sacrificed to the specious or violent encroachments of tyranny. It may, indeed, be almost received as an established principle, that when patriotism is driven for vindication of the laws to that which, in another cause, would be denominated crime, it has outlived the period in which it can be beneficially exercised. Still, however, so strong is the impulse which urges to this vindication of right, that this lesson, with all the frequency of its occurrence, does not yet appear to have convinced the few who are bold

enough to need its instruction. The fate of Galeazzo Sforza presents a lively and unfortunate illustration of the truth of our position. It had not been the fortune of Francesco Sforza, more than the crimes of the princes of the house of Visconti, which had secured to the former the dukedom of Milan on the death of Filippo Maria. The atrocities which had marked the succession of monarchs, from the time of the accession of the archbishop of Milan to that of the last prince of his family, had rendered the Milanese desirous of any change which might rescue them from so degrading a subjection. No sooner, nevertheless, had the acquired rule of the Sforzas descended but one generation, and assumed the ordinary character of a legitimate sovereignty, than all the regal vices which had made the name of the Visconti odious to the people over which its possessors had ruled, were presented in the person of the new sovereign to the unhappy Milanese. The public at large abandoned themselves to despair, and were willing to hug the chains that they could not disengage. Thence it became madness to dream of restoring them to a freedom which they had ceased to appreciate, and which they would not accept at the price of the dangers by which it was to be maintained. Unable, however, to judge beyond the feelings of their own excited bosoms, there were a few individuals who resolved to make the attempt. Three young students, inflamed by the study of the classics, in which the praises of liberty were continually repeated, and the disgrace of slavery depicted, by authors who wrote for the fierce republicans of Rome, conceived the idea of restoring the freedom of the city, now for many generations abandoned by the citizens. Fixed in their resolve, they attended with impatience the day on which they had determined to execute their plans, and, full of the ardour inspired by the cause, forgot the sanctity of the spot on which they had concerted to immolate their victim. It may be also that

with the fulness of enthusiasm the spirit of religion mingled itself, and that the sacred character of the intended altar in their eyes made the contemplated murder more like a sacrifice. Saint Stephen's day was chosen by them for the accomplishment of their purpose, as it was known that, on the occasion of celebrating the martyrdom of that saint, the duke would not fail to be present. They trusted, moreover, that it would then be easy in so large an assembly to summon the people to the re-assertion of their liberties; and that the conspiracy, then first made known in the moment of its successful issue, might appear to the congregated host to have a more extensive support, when each one was ignorant of his fellow's ignorance, and might suppose him a party to the design. The three young men, Giovanni Andrea Lampognano, Carlo Visconti, and Girolamo Olgiato, with their master, were the only individuals made acquainted with the plot. On the appointed day the conspirators were at their posts, and after commending themselves and their enterprize to to the care of the saint who was supposed to watch as peculiar guardian over the destinies of their country, they disposed themselves in such a manner as to secure the blow which they were about to strike. After many delays, Galeazzo, attended by a princely escort of court satellites, made his appearance at the principal door of the temple. He crossed the threshold, but never reached the altar towards which he was approaching. Each of the conspirators had consecrated himself to death if necessary to make sure their victim. In the midst of his attendants, they rushed on the miserable tyrant; and while Lampognano seized his arms, the comrades of his bold undertaking plunged their daggers each a second time into the body of the prince. The first indication to the assembled multitude of any tumult was the prostration of Galeazzo, who fell, without the slightest opportunity of resistance, under the unexpected assault. Six blows of the con-

spirators' daggers made as many mortal wounds; and the resolute youths, when they beheld him at their feet, believed that they had given back freedom to Lombardy. Scarcely an individual, however, moved in their behalf; and Lampognani and Visconti, surrounded by the hired escort of the duke, were suffered to be slain upon the body of him whom they had vainly hoped to make an offering to the liberty of their country. Olgiati escaped in the confusion from the building, but no one held the hand of friendship to receive him, and where he had looked to find himself proclaimed a deliverer, he found himself branded as a murderer. Disappointed thus in the dearest object of his desires, he easily allowed himself to fall into the power of the police, desirous of terminating an existence whose brightest hopes were withered by the pusilanimity of his fellow-citizens. Yet in the desertion of his friends and the shame that he felt for his country, he derived consolation from the motive of his generous action; and while the civil authority declared him a traitor, and the officer of its decrees prepared to execute his sentence by the infliction of a felon's punishment upon him, wrapped in recollections of the past or in vision of the time to come, and filled with the enthusiasm of the ancient republic, from the pages of whose history he had drunk in the love of liberty, and whose language seemed to him, in that moment of his country's degradation, as alone fitted to express the emotions of his soul, the young hero exclaimed, as the executioner was striking the fatal blow, with a loud voice and an undisturbed accent, *Mors acerba, fama perpetua, stabit vetus memoria facti!* Thus, at the age of twenty-three, the last asserter of the Lombard republic perished on the scaffold.

CHAPTER II.

Jealousy of the Families of the Pazzi and Medici.—Conspiracy of the Pazzi and the Pope.—Death of Julian de' Medici, and Failure of the Attempt to reform the State.—The Florentines excommunicated.—Embassy of the Florentines to the Pope, and Removal of the Interdict.—Conspiracy of the Frescobaldi.—Death of Sixtus, and Election of Innocent VIII.—General Peace in Italy.—Death of Lorenzo de' Medici.—Piero, his Son, succeeds to his Authority.—Election of Alexander VI.—Pretensions of Charles VIII. to the Throne of Naples.—Preparation for the Invasion of Italy.

WHILE these things were passing in the North, the ambition of the pope and the Medici was ripening into personal hatred in the Centre and the South. The first act of hostility, which both parties were waiting but for an opportunity of commencing, was committed by the Church in the investment of Francesco Salviati as archbishop of Pisa. The opposition of this prelate to the family of the Medici was notorious, and his appointment could be considered in no other light than as a direct attack upon the ruling interest at Florence. This open disregard of their desires by the pope, inflamed the fury of the Signoria, now in the acknowledged dependence of the Medici. They refused, therefore, to give possession to the nominee of Sixtus, and for a long time succeeded in holding him excluded. In meeting so unusual an act of insubordination, the pope resolved to charge it at once to the Medici, by making them responsible for its commission; accordingly, withdrawing the funds of the papacy, which had for a long time been intrusted to their house, he transferred the important and lucrative charge to the family of the Pazzi, the most zealous of all whom virtuous principle or interest had collected into one party of opposition to the Medicean administration. A long rivalry had divided these powerful families. The Pazzi had

belonged originally to the castle nobility, which in the early ages of the republic had given so much difficulty to its citizens and magistrates; and if, in the general impulse in favour of democracy, they had been compelled to abandon the charter of their nobility, their opposition to the Medici was, perhaps, embittered by the recollection that the time had been in which a member of the family of the Pazzi would have set his dependents to contend with the ignoble progenitors of the arrogant money-dealers who now pretended to rule over the destinies of the city. Cosimo had always held in dread the well-known dislike which the Pazzi were at no pains to conceal. He knew that when public virtue had failed, the resentment of private jealousy might succeed against all the intrigues of his house; and he looked to the Pazzi as those who, from their influence, their boldness, and their ancient enmity, might be designated the first, and at the same time the most unmanageable, of the opposition which he anticipated for his contemplated usurpation. To remove all cause of fear, and to render, if possible, the interests of the two families identical, or to make, at least, the influence of his rivals conducive to the advancement of his race, he had negotiated a union by the marriage of his grand-daughter Bianca with Guglielmo, one of the most prominent members of the family which he wished to conciliate. The disposition of Lorenzo, so unlike that of his grandfather, as indeed were the epochs in which they respectively flourished, rejected with indignation the unnatural tie. He could not cease, even with those who had now become a part of his family, to assume the prince; and he was willing that they should be invested with all the honours of the state, but on the condition that they were willing to receive them as his gift. This ground, assumed on the respective sides, it became no less a matter of necessity than of pride to maintain the position. Lorenzo, having the controul of the Signory, therefore found

it not difficult to exclude the Pazzi from office whenever they were candidates for public employments.

If for a time the hatred of the principal members of either family was only manifested in political opposition, it was not long before Lorenzo found an opportunity of convincing the obstinate Pazzi that he had indeed possessed himself of all authority in the state; that his hand directed the government; and that his voice controlled the last sanctuary of freedom,—the courts of civil and criminal jurisdiction. The discovery of this fact it was, most probably, that convinced them of the hopelessness of an appeal to the constituted authorities, and drove them to seek the last resource of the injured, by resort to personal adjudication. In cases like this it is that individuals are driven to the ultimate appeal which nature authorizes when the organ of society is destroyed; when the social compact is dissolved, and the fountains of social life are poisoned or spent—then it is that the voice of nature prompts the means of attack and defence, while all the ordinary rules of moral law are suspended or destroyed. It may be that, even in the violation or dissolution of the political bond, the individual still is subject to the closer law which governs the relations of men; and that it is only the mass, which, freed from constitutional restraint, can justly assume the responsibility of a resort to force; but when, in addition to this violation, the rights of the individual are invaded, and the machine by which his intercourse with his fellow is broken, he must resort to the first principles furnished by nature to all her works for their preservation, or allow himself to be stricken from the number of her creations.

A rich inheritance had fallen to the right of the wife of Giovanni de' Pazzi, the only daughter of Giovanni de' Borromei. To this inheritance (most probably by instigation of Lorenzo), a nephew of the deceased pretended a claim against the natural heir. Recourse

was had to the law; but the law was silent, and the voice of power spoke in its stead. The right of the daughter was set aside, and the inheritance was given to a stranger, for such the nephew might be considered in a contest with the child of Borromei. Julian de' Medici, the more crafty, or at least, the less headstrong, brother of Lorenzo, was terrified himself at the possible effect of so barefaced a corruption as that by which it was proposed to strip the wife of Giovanni of her patrimony; he could not believe that the Florentines, though willing to resign all participation in the political administration, were yet prepared for the depravation of those institutions which have always been held most sacred in the progress of civil society, and which, dedicated to the administration of justice, have been generally respected by the most irresponsible despots.

But nothing was sacred in the eyes of Lorenzo; and as he was without that salutary fear, which, in the absence of principle, serves to restrain the passions and evil propensities of men, so he was without a check in the unprincipled pursuit of his objects, whether of ambition or revenge. The injuries continually heaped on this proud and spirited family, seemed for a time productive of no other result than such as the vanity or spleen of Lorenzo desired. Jacopo de' Pazzi, who was considered the head of his house, was silent beneath the repeated insults which were offered to his name; and the inferior members, looking with deference to his example, resolved to imitate his forbearance. All, therefore, in the city appeared to argue a general acquiescence in the designs of the Medici. One member, however, of the house, Francesco, the brother of Giovanni and Guglielmo, less tractable than the rest, refused to bend to the authority of Lorenzo, and to receive, through his hands, those offices which he felt himself entitled to expect from the citizens and the laws. Despairing, however, of effecting any thing

against the power which had now become sovereign in his country, he removed to Rome, where, as the acknowledged enemy of the Medici, he was chosen by Sixtus to succeed them as agents for the management of the papal treasures. At Rome he connected himself in interest with the ambitious nephew of the pope, for whose advancement the first seeds of discord had been sown between the heads of the Florentine government and the father of the church. The count Girolamo, in his frequent and unreserved intercourse with Francesco, discovered very soon the intensity of the hatred which occupied the soul of his friend; and, uniting no less cordially, though with greater coolness, in the same enmity, he easily inspired the Florentine with hopes, which, within the walls of his native city, had seemed too faint to induce him to action. Francesco was anxious, at all hazards, to reform the government and state of Florence; he believed, indeed, that the citizens would be willing to receive their emancipation at his hands, though they had not the energy to strike for it themselves. In this belief, he explained to Riario the necessity of securing the aid of Sixtus; which the nephew of that prelate did not hesitate to promise him, though it was not concealed that the first act of the revolutionists, as an indispensable measure to the reform of the state, must be the assassination of the brothers who presided over its administration. The political interests which actuated Riario were too important to yield to this consideration; and as to Francesco, it is possible that he looked upon the death of his personal enemies as a sacrifice rather than a murder, since they were at the same time the enemies of his country and the oppressors of her liberty.

It now became necessary to communicate to Sixtus the designs to which, if he could not participate in them, it was well known he would not interpose any authoritative objection. They had already found a zealous advocate in Salviati, the archbishop of Pisa.

The leader of the papal forces was at this time Giovan Battista Montesecco, a highly respectable soldier, and devoted to the interests of count Girolamo Riario. Moved by the authority of this name, Montesecco became a party to the conspiracy. He, however, had less feeling in the design; with him, the resolution to take the lives of Lorenzo and Julian, not easy in execution, appeared, if successfully executed, but the beginning of the revolution, while to the eager animosity of the others it had seemed the consummation. They now began, therefore, to discuss the manner of reducing to form the plan which had been resolved by the enthusiasm of hate, but which for its completion required the more cautious deliberations of a less headlong passion. Francesco, in this condition of the conspiracy, leaving Salviati and Riario to confer with the pope when the occasion should offer, departed for Florence to gain the concurrence and aid of the head of his house, the aged Jacopo de' Pazzi, on whose decision would depend the assistance which might be expected from the junior members of the family. Although Francesco was fully aware that his uncle participated in the detestation borne by all of his race and name to the Medici, he had expected to find him backward in undertaking any thing against their now established authority. He had thought, however, that the ease with which the end might be achieved would move the habitual coldness of the old man's disposition, augmented as it must be by the prudence and timidity of age. More backward than Francesco had expected to find him, Jacopo refused to take part in the conspiracy, and his ardent kinsman found himself under the necessity of invoking a higher authority than his own—an authority to which the caution of age would yield more willingly than to the eloquent enthusiasm of his hostility. He dispatched, therefore, a messenger to his accomplices at Rome, and besought them to obtain such sanction for their measures as should remove the scruples of Ja-

copo, and make him less reluctant to participate in a measure which they might be assured was disagreeable to him only because he was doubtful of its success.

In accordance with this demand, Montesecco was dispatched to Florence, on his way, as it was pretended, to Faenza, to secure the interests of his employer, the count Girolamo, about to be endangered in that city by the approaching and threatening dissolution of its prince. Before his departure upon this important commission, it was deemed necessary to receive the official sanction of the pope, on whom it was intended to rely for military assistance to complete the revolution of which the death of Lorenzo was to be the commencement In the presence, therefore, of the archbishop Salviati and the count Girolamo, Montesecco was admitted to a formal audience on this subject at the palace of Sixtus. The confession of Montesecco, still extant, details the conversation which occurred at this interview. His Holiness, after being drawn to an open discussion of the contemplated proceeding, remarked that he had now an opportunity of serving the reformers by dispatching an armed force on the way to Florence, under the pretence of reducing to allegiance and punishing the disaffection of Carlo da Montone, the son of Braccio, an hereditary enemy to the papal court. "Observe, however," continued he, "that though the guilt of the Medici requires this reform, yet the nature of our holy office forbids that we counsel to the shedding of blood; wherefore, while we assent to this necessary change, we charge you that you take the life of no man in its accomplishment." It is scarcely to be supposed that this command would have been given to such a servant as Montesecco, accustomed to obey the letter of his instruction, and moved to an office foreign to his disposition, by the sovereign and sacred authority of his master, had Sixtus not anticipated the remonstrance of his nephew. The crafty prince com prehended the policy of his uncle. He therefore re-

plied, that the known aversion of his Holiness for every species of violence would undoubtedly induce his servants to act with all the moderation that the circumstance might allow, and that no other blood should be shed than such as should be indispensable for the reform of the afflicted city. As Sixtus refused a direct reply to this declaration, which was manifestly intended to operate only upon the indecision of Montesecco, the archbishop proceeded as if in continuation, "be satisfied then, holy father, to intrust the guidance of this bark to our care, and assure yourself that we will guide it prudently and well." To which Sixtus, unwilling, from habitual craft and care, to commit himself, even before the instruments of his own designs, and willing to have all the benefit of his consent to the death of the Medici without an actual expression of acquiescence, replied, "I am satisfied that it remain in your hands."

With this understanding, the blunt but trusty soldier departed upon his errand; and, armed with the authority of the pope, and with the promise of his assistance and that of the king of Naples, he succeeded in bending the cold and unambitious uncle of the Pazzi to the designs of his nephews. To excite the less suspicion, he had been provided with credentials to Lorenzo himself, with whom he was commissioned to confer, in the name of his master, on the subject of the affairs of Faenza and Imola. But Lorenzo was no less an adept in the art of dissembling than Sixtus himself. He was not a stranger to the enmity of Rome and of all in its interest; yet he received the papal envoy in such a manner as to remove all former impressions of his hostility to the church, and to excite his admiration, in spite of the representations with which he had been armed against the insinuating treachery of the Proteus into whose court he was thus introduced. The reverence, however, with which he was accustomed to obey the orders that issued from the chair of St. Peter, overcame even the regard with which Lo-

renzo had been able to inspire him; and Montesecco, rendered now more unfit than ever for the office, resolved to perform the duty assigned to him.

In the meantime, the execution of the plot being at last resolved upon, it was found expedient to add to the number of the conspirators. Of the Pazzi, besides Francesco, who was the animating spirit of the whole, and Jacopo, the other less conspicuous members of the family were all in a greater or less degree involved, except Renato, who belonged to another branch of the house. Jacopo Salviati, the brother of the archbishop of Pisa, together with his cousin of the same name, was also admitted to the confidence of the little band which had undertaken to restore, from its degrading slavery, the country that did not deserve the sacrifice they were about to make for it. In addition to these auxiliaries, Giacopo, the son of the famous scholar Poggio, Antonio Maffei, a Volterran, yet exasperated by the cruelty of Lorenzo towards his native city and countryman, and Stefano Bagnoni, a priest, employed as a teacher in the family of Jacopo de' Pazzi, were considered worthy to be trusted with a knowledge of the conspiracy, and with a part in its execution; and in the midst of the general corruption, and more especially in the servility with which the literary characters of those days inclined to the interested favours and protection of the great, it is reviving to discover a mind like that of Poggio uncontaminated, and preferring the liberty of his country and the dignity of freedom to the humiliating patronage of vulgar power. But the most important accession to the strength of the conspirators was the acquisition of Napoleone Francesi and Bernardo Bandini. The number who were now in possession of this important secret, rendered the instant execution of the design imperative; and as it was, we cannot withhold our admiration from the fidelity with which, amid all the temptations to treachery, the par-

ies to this noble compact preserved their faith to each other.

It only now remained to dispose the aid which was to be furnished by Naples and Rome in such a manner as to secure the reform of the government on the death of the brothers, and to await or form an opportunity of dispatching both of them in the same place and at the same moment. The former purpose was effected by posting Lorenzo da Castello on the side of Sienna, and Tolentino on that of Imola; whence they were ordered to approach towards the city, that they might be in readiness to receive and execute without delay the orders of the heads of the conspiracy. The last measures were next to be concerted; and the division of that one day's duty which was to complete the restoration of the republic, or to fasten the disgrace and disaster of hereditary rule on Florence and the Florentines forever.

The young nephew of the count Girolamo had been placed in the university of Pisa, for the purpose of benefiting by the instruction of its faculty, at that time the most renowned in Italy. Here, though yet a youth in the prosecution of his studies, he had been created cardinal by his grand-uncle, whom nothing but respect for the holy office which he filled prevented the Italians from calling his grandfather. The presence of the young dignitary in Florence was now considered necessary to the accomplishment of the grand design in that city, and accordingly his coming was announced to the Medici, who, as acknowledged heads of the government, were expected to receive its guests. The moment was fast approaching for the consummation of the great undertaking. Instead of entering Florence, the cardinal was detained at a lodge belonging to the Pazzi, distant but a few miles from the city, where the brothers Julian and Lorenzo were invited to meet him. Lorenzo, with his son Piero, then a boy, accepted the invitation; but as it was deemed unsafe

to attempt the life of one only of the brothers, the blow which had been meditated for that day was deferred till the next. Those who dictated the wishes and words of young Riario, finding themselves thus frustrated in their design for that moment, prompted him to express a desire that the next day, which was Sunday, he might be present at the peformance of the ceremony of high-mass in the church of Santa Reparata. He was accordingly invited by Lorenzo to enter the city for the purpose of gratifying his wish.

The evening before the day now finally destined for the accomplishment of the long-meditated plot, was spent in partitioning the labours of the morning that was to decide the fate of the conspirators, of the Medici, and of Florence. The care of dispatching Lorenzo was offered to Montesecco; but the same blind reverence which had made him willing at the command of Sixtus to enrol himself in the conspiracy, now made him shudder at the thought of violating, by the shedding of blood, the sanctity of the place which necessity compelled his accomplices to select as the altar of sacrifice. It had already been arranged that Julian should fall by the hands of Francesco de' Pazzi and the resolute Bandini. The unexpected refusal of Montesecco was therefore of the greatest detriment to the success of the plot; in the urgency of the moment, while the death of the less guilty Julian was secured by the resolution and unerring certainty of the hands to which it had been intrusted, the fate of Lorenzo was confided to the less expert and less determined arms of the Volterran Antonio Maffei and the ecclesiastic Bagnoni. The rest of the conspirators were assigned to the various duties which might be required of them, to excite the people to liberty and to awe the party of the aristocracy.

As the hour approached, when the cardinal had already ascended the pulpit, and those to whom the death of Lorenzo had been given in charge had taken

their posts, it was discovered that Julian was not yet in the church. The issue of the whole design was now at stake; and the absence of Julian seemed to threaten the frustration of what, in the eagerness of their hopes, the conspirators had appeared to hold as already effected. Francesco and Bandini therefore hastily abandoned their places, and directed their steps towards the dwelling of the Medici, where they found their intended victim, who had resolved not to be present at the ceremony about to be performed in the cathedral church. The Pazzi and the Medici had too long been known as open enemies for either party to be deceived by any demonstration of regard on the part of the other; yet it had been at the same time a portion of the policy of the latter to behave without any show of suspicion towards every member of the family by which their downfall would, as it was too well known, have been chronicled as a day of thanksgiving. When Francesco, therefore, and Bandini approached with the warmest manifestations of regard, and urged the necessity of Julian's presence to honour the visit of the cardinal, whether persuaded, or afraid of the suspicion of fear, he allowed himself to be led to the church. Francesco, to conceal the emotion with which his pulses trembled and his heart leaped in his breast, endeavoured to assume an air of lightness foreign to his character and his relation to the high dignitary whom he accompanied; and Julian, not to be less in appearance unconcerned, received with courtesy the unwonted display of hilarity. A sudden thought, however, on approaching the gates of the church, possessed the mind of Francesco, and seemed in a moment to communicate itself to the heart of his colleague. If Julian, in the suspicion of danger, had prepared himself with a concealed or under mail, the first blow of their daggers intended for his destruction, and arrested in its course, would become the signal for their own. Renewing, therefore, the protestations of

pleasure at his consent to appear in the church in honour of the presence of Riario, and with other demonstrations of affection, they threw themselves one after the other about his neck, feeling the parts which they intended to strike, and assuring themselves that there was nothing to intervene between the blow of a resolute arm and the heart of the victim which they had resolved to offer up to the violated liberty of their country. A moment after they entered the church. The priest was in the act of administering the holy sacrament, and all eyes were directed to the ministering servant, when Bandini buried at a single blow his dagger in the breast of Julian, who instantly fell at his feet. The long-smothered rage of Francesco then found vent. He sprang upon the body, and long after the miserable corse had ceased to feel, continued to drive his weapon with the blindness of fury into its bleeding throat and breast. Unmoved by the confusion which prevailed around, he thus clung to the lifeless form till overcome by the loss of blood proceeding from a wound, which, in the impetuosity of his rage, he had inflicted upon himself.

The sturdier Lorenzo, however, had escaped. Unused to such an act, the hearts of Maffei and Bagnoni had not failed, but their arms had proved too weak. A slight wound, inflicted on his neck, alone bore witness that not less than his unfortunate and less unworthy brother, Lorenzo had been marked for destruction.

Bandini perceiving the escape of the greater tyrant, whose death was so much more important to the reformation of the government, abandoning Julian to the searching dagger of Francesco, resolved, if possible, to atone with his own arm for the feebleness and failure of Bagnoni and Maffei. The first who attempted to interfere was felled by his athletic arm to the earth; and Lorenzo, had he not taken shelter in the sacristy, which he barricaded within, and around which the slavish people gathered without, might have crowned

by his death the valour of Bandini, and the hopes of those few of his countrymen who valued the privileges and the glory of liberty. The terrified cardinal clung during all this time to the altar, from which the magistracy, when informed of the proceedings in the church, despatched an escort to conduct him to the palace.

In the meanwhile, the conspirators whose duties had required their absence from the church, and who had the task assigned to them of securing the Signoria, had not been more successful on their part. A number of Perugians, banished by the predominant faction from their native city, had been attached, by promises of restoration to their country, to the cause of the Pazzi. Under the conduct of Salviati, with others of the populace who had been gained for the purpose, a respectable troop proceeded to the palace of the Signoria. The greater number were ordered to remain without, and take possession of the gates when the noise within should declare that the work was begun. Salviati, accompanied by a few, then repaired to the chancery, where he left his friends, and continued to the hall in which the Signoria was assembled. This was the fatal step; for the doors of the chancery were so constructed that it was impossible to open them on either side without the key; and Salviati, having accidentally closed them behind him, thus made his companions prisoners in the hands of his enemies, and cut himself off from the possibility of aid. Ignorant, however, of the situation in which he had placed himself, he proceeded to the chamber in which the Signoria were accustomed to dine, and found them assembled at the board with the Gonfalonier Petrucci at their head. This officer, accustomed to read the countenances of those with whom he was engaged, discovered, in the appearance and manner of Salviati, enough to convince him that something of moment against the government was connected with his unusual visit and strange perturbation. Leaving the

hall to confirm his suspicion by further information, he heard the cry of *Palle*, *Palle*, and discovered the whole city to be in commotion. The Palle or Balls were the family device in the arms of the Medici; and the still increasing vehemence of the cry, in which that word was heard above every other, convinced the Gonfalonier that something had been attempted against the authority of Lorenzo, and that the city had risen in his behalf. Pursuing his search, he discovered Poggio, together with many others of the conspirators, separated in the manner which has been described. While the fate of those who were in the palace was thus unhappily sealed, a last effort was undertaken by the resolute Pazzi. Francesco had retired from the church, and mounting on horseback, intended to ride through the city with his little band and invite the citizens to join with him and with his friends in the vindication of their liberty. Unable, however, from the severity of the wound which he had inflicted on himself, to keep his seat, he sent to urge his uncle Giacopo without delay to take his place and summon the people. That which the enthusiasm of Francesco might have obtained, the coldness of Giacopo's character was almost sure to prevent. As the old man rode through the streets he was saluted by the curses of the rabble, and every window and house-top showered down stones and other missiles upon the head of the unsuccessful conspirator. A little more energy on the part of Maffei and Bagnoni would have made him, in the eyes of the same populace, a hero and a deliverer; and many who wished that success to his cause which it was now the crime of himself and his colleagues not to have achieved, were drawn by a selfish fear to join in the slavish zeal of the adherents and purchased advocates of the Medici. Thus abandoned by the people, or seeing rather the people thus abandoned by themselves, he turned disgusted from the enterprize, and, passing through the gates of the city, prepared to

secure his safety by voluntary banishment from his ungrateful and degraded country.

On this failure of the conspiracy, all Florence seemed solicitous to manifest the interest which she took in the safety of her tyrant; and in proportion as each individual thus hoped to gain the favour of Lorenzo, he was loud and furious in his denunciations of those who had participated in, or been privy to, the murder of Julian. Salviati and Poggio were hung without a hearing at the windows of the palace of the Signoria, and the limbs of many of less note were carried on pikes to glut the savage revenge of the survivor. Against the Pazzi, however, the servile fury of the mob was more particularly directed. Their houses were burned or beaten to the ground; and all who bore the name, whether participators in the conspiracy or not, were designated as proper objects of public execration. Even Rinato, though he had opposed the whole design, was sentenced to death, and hung beside the aged Giacopo, who had been arrested in his flight and re-conducted to Florence. Francesco was dragged from his bed to the scaffold, but his deportment in that moment took half their triumph from his enemies. Disdaining to complain, he also despised too much the miserable rabble who had once been citizens, to address a word of justification or of exhortation to their ears. He did not loudly glory in his attempt, because he would not speak to his fallen countrymen the noble language of the high feeling which they had ceased to exhibit; and with a manner that indicated a mind removed from the scene of which he formed a part, and the time to which in a moment he was to cease to belong, he submitted himself to the executioner. Of the whole number that accompanied Salviati to the palace, one individual alone survived the day of the conspiracy; but the ferocity of Lorenzo remained still unsated; and all the blood poured out as an offering to his pride, was insufficient to console him for the escape

of Bandini, who lived to boast that had the life of Lorenzo been placed in his hands, he would not have survived his far less guilty brother to embrue his hands in the generous blood of the Pazzi. No show or act of servility was now too great for the Florentines; and when they could no longer pamper their master with blood, they still found means, in their officious baseness, to minister to his revenge and to his outraged vanity, by violating the sanctity of the grave, and tearing from its quiet repose the mangled body of him who had taught them the vulnerability and the mortality of their oppressors.

"To stigmatize the remembrance of this conspiracy, therefore, with some peculiar mark of infamy, Giacopo de' Pazzi, who at first had been buried in a vault where his ancestors lay interred, was pulled out of that grave and tumbled into a hole without the walls of the city as if he had been excommunicated: out of which his body was taken up a second time, and dragged naked through the city in the halter with which he had been hanged: and as the persons that had treated him in this manner did not think his bones worthy of being suffered to rest upon the land, they at last threw him into the Arno, upon which there was at that time a great flood. A terrible example indeed of the instability of fortune! to see a man of his great opulence and authority, and in the full enjoyment of every blessing, thus suddenly thrown headlong from such a height of prosperity, into the lowest abyss of misery and ignominy. He was said to have been guilty of many vices, particularly of gaming and swearing, and that to a degree beyond the greatest reprobates of his time: but, on the other hand, he had some good qualities; for he was exceeding charitable to the poor, and bountiful to religious houses. It should likewise be mentioned to his commendation, that the day before this plot was to be put in execution, he paid all his debts, and consigned all the merchandizes belonging

to the other people, which he had either in the custom-house or in his own possession, to their right owners, with the greatest care and exactness imaginable; that so nobody might partake of his misfortunes if he miscarried in the attempt."*

On this unhappy termination of the conspiracy, the armies of the pope, under the command of Tolentino and Lorenzo da Castello, retired towards the limits of the ecclesiastical state; and the fate of the Medici triumphed over the intrigues and the arms of the church, now for the first time in many centuries displayed in the cause of freedom and justice.

Yet Sixtus resolved to make another effort still to detach from the love of their tyrant the people who had so long presented the spectacle of a free government and faithful laws and incorruptible magistrates, to the world, which admired, but had not the strength to emulate, their virtue. He called them to the contemplation of their former freedom, and charging upon Lorenzo the crimes of which the citizens had for his sake been guilty towards the church, he fulminated against him the curse of its sovereign-head in denunciations of temporal and spiritual perdition. He was unwilling to depend, however, upon these arms alone; for though the throne of the pontiffs had been for years assuming a more regal character than had belonged to it even in the days of Gregory and Boniface, it was not to be disguised that the voice with which its occupant spoke to the consciences of men was day by day decreasing in power; and that the spiritual strength was failing in exact proportion as the ambitious prelate was anxious to sustain it by physical force, and by the ordinary engines of national and political power. Still, however, the effect of the interdict of the city, and the excommunication of Lorenzo, might be fatal in their effects to his authority; the populace, which, for

* Farneworth's Macchiavelli.

his sake, had not recoiled from the commission of a murder that, even in the more enlightened age of the Medici, might seem to superadd the crime of sacrilege, would possibly shrink from the endurance of its penalty, and sacrifice to their own impunity the object of papal displeasure and ecclesiastical hate in the person of their favourite.

Lorenzo himself appeared to be not entirely without apprehension; and when he heard himself charged as the sole author of a war, in which the influence of the church and the strength of Naples were to be combined against his country, he felt that he could not justly complain if he should find that country preserving her own safety, and preferring her preservation to the advancement of his house and fortunes. He therefore resolved to encounter the storm in its weakness, rather than abide the discharge of its collected fury; and, summoning the citizens to an open conference, he proceeded to justify himself and the conduct of his ancestors. His speech was artfully contrived to win the favour on a breath of which the future fortunes of his life were staked. After returning thanks to them for the ardour with which they had defended his person and revenged the death of his brother, he continued: "Consider, I beseech you, illustrious citizens, the melancholy situation to which the malevolence of fortune had reduced us, when we were not secure in our own houses, amongst our friends and relations, nor even in the house of God itself. Those that are in fear or distress have always recourse to their kindred and acquaintance for protection; but we had the misfortune to find our nearest friends and allies ready armed for our destruction. Such as are persecuted either by public or private rage usually find an asylum in the church: but places that afford refuge to all others, were marked out and destined for our utter extinction: and where even parricides and assassins meet with shelter, the Medici were doomed to be murdered. The

Almighty, however, who never abandoned our family in times past, is graciously pleased to preserve it at present, and has taken upon himself to vindicate the justice of our cause: for what injury have we ever done to any man, that could inflame him with so diabolical a thirst of revenge? we never offended those, in any respect, either publicly or privately, who lately shewed so inveterate and particular an enmity against us: for if we had been so disposed, we could long ago have put it out of their power to hurt us. If they complain of any hardships they have received from the public, as owing to our influence (in case they have really met with such, which I declare I know nothing of) that ought to be considered as an insult upon the majesty of this palace and the government in general, rather than an affront to our family in particular; since it would be plainly and directly accusing you of being our creatures, and ready at any time to oppress your fellow-citizens at our instigation or command: an imputation than which nothing can be more false. If it was jealousy, or envy, or fear of our authority, that prompted them to such a deed, their proceedings were not so properly a reflection upon us, as yourselves who conferred it upon us. Power, indeed, usurped by violence, naturally and justly inspires mankind with apprehension; but surely there is nothing to be dreaded from a person to whom it is freely given by others as a reward for a long and uninterrupted course of liberality and good actions. Ye very well know, illustrious citizens, that none of my ancestors ever arrived at any degree of greatness or honour, which they were not in a manner forced to accept, by the concurrent desire and importunity of yourselves and the Signory. My grandfather Cosimo did not seek to return from banishment by violence and force of arms, but came back with the general consent and invitation of the whole city. My father, when grown old and infirm, and not in a capacity to defend the state against so

many enemies, was yet sufficiently supported by your authority and benevolence: and I myself, who was but a child in a manner when he died, could not, by any means, have maintained the dignity of our family, if I had not been assisted by your favour and counsel: and certain it is, that none of us ever have been, or ever will be, able to govern this republic without your countenance and co-operation. But let us suppose we had injured them in the most grievous manner, and that they had sufficient reason to seek our ruin. Yet what have the Signory done to offend them? why did they insult the palace? what could induce them to enter into a confederacy with the pope, and the king of Naples, to subvert the constitution and liberties of their country? what motives could tempt or provoke them to disturb the tranquillity which Italy had so long enjoyed? There might, indeed, have been some appearance of justice, in endeavouring to revenge themselves upon people that had done them any injury: but why should the public be involved in private quarrels and resentments? For these proceedings there can be no excuse. From hence it comes to pass, that we are threatened with these dangers, though the persons that brought them upon us are extinct. To their instigations it is owing that we are now invaded by the pope and the king of Naples, who pretend, truly, that it is only against me and my family that they have engaged in this war; and I heartily wish that was true; for then there would be a speedy and certain remedy to be found; as I am not so bad a citizen as to prefer my own private welfare to that of the public: on the contrary, I would presently extinguish the flame, though I perished in it myself. But as it is generally the custom of powerful and ambitious princes to varnish over the injustice of their wicked designs with some fair and plausible pretence, they have taken this method at present, to excite your resentment against me: and if you think I deserve it,

venerable fathers and illustrious citizens, I am in your hands, and ready to be disposed of entirely according to your wisdom. You are my parents and protectors; whatsoever you command, I shall always obey, not only with cheerfulness, but with joy; and if it be your pleasure, I will willingly be the victim that shall put an end to a war which has begun with the sacrifice of my brother."*

In connexion with the interdict and excommunication, Sixtus had directed a brief to the magistracy of Florence—to this it was now resolved to reply. For this purpose a synod was convened in the city, in which a refutation of the charges contained in the brief were prepared, with a vindication of the right of resistance to the interdict. In conformity with the resolutions of this convention, the Signoria addressed an answer of justification to the pope, in which they reminded him that the delegated authority which characterized his holy office had not been intrusted to him as an instrument of bloodshed and treachery; that notwithstanding the share which he was known to have taken in the conspiracy, the life of his nephew had been held sacred, and his person restored to liberty; and that it was more becoming his character as a Christian minister and apostolic vicegerent, to assemble the princes of Europe for the defence of the faith against the Turkish encroachments, than to engage in the excitement of Christians against their Christian brethren.†

* Farnworth's Macchiavelli.

† "Artes sunt istæ Pontificiæ Majestatis dignæ, et Vicariatus Christi? Movet te fortassè, et de ea re Laurentium succenses, quod e furentibus populi armis Raphaelem Cardinalem, tuum nepotem eripi curaverit, et salvum reddiderit! movet, quod, trucidato Juliano fratre, saucius ipse, divina potius, quam humana aliqua spe, sceleratos gladios sacrilegosque parricidarum, et mortem evitaverit! Si cædi se passus sit ab missis a vobis efferatissimis satellitibus; si Arcem libertatis nostræ, publicum Palatium captum dolis à proditoribus vestris, non recuperassemus; si trucidandos Nosmet, ac Magistratus nostros, et cives tradidissemus vobis; nihil modo tecum contentionis haberemus.

This general note of preparation on either side sufficiently indicated the coming contest, and Frederic d'Urbino, at the head of the papal and Calabrian forces, entered the territory on the side of Siena. The duke of Ferrara was, on the other hand, elected captain-general of the Florentine forces, and though unequal in numbers, assumed the defensive with a great deal of vigour. The aid which the duke of Milan had been expected to furnish, was greatly diminished by the successful efforts of the court of Naples to excite the people of Genoa against the government of the Milanese. To this diminution of the means of resistance was added another on the side of the Florentines, which nothing but a thorough acquaintance with the character of Sixtus could have led them to anticipate. From

"Sed ut ad alteram descendamus causam; quomodo talis aliquis civis publico est, ut scribis, bono adversatus? Aliæ causæ sunt, quæ arma Christiana movent contrà Christianos, et defensionem Religionis, atque expeditionem in Turchos impediunt, ut, aliàs quoque, Imperatorem, Ratisbonæ, eam procurantem impedierunt, in quam tamen nos publice longas naves, et tibi, et Ferdinando Regi, complures dono dedimus; et, Cosmus, Laurenti avus, suprascriptus, suis privatis sumptibus, Summo Pontifici unam perpulchrè armatam est elargitus; præterea, magnam pecuniarum vim, ut prò viribus laboranti Religioni nostræ succurreremus, dum Laurentius de Medicis in urbe esset, subministravimus; et juvimus 20 florenorum millibus Ferdinandum Regem, quem modò fama fert, et legatis, et muneribus conciliare sibi Religionis Christianæ publicum hostem, et qui, cum te conjunctus, modo Christianis bellum infert, dum in limine Italiæ superbissimus ille victoriosissimusque insultat. Juvimus etiam, hortatu tuo, Matthiam Hungariæ Regem; et, qui sunt nobiscum fædere conjûnctissimi, Venetis non defuimus. Ad quem multò hæc magis pertinent, pluraque majoraque non fecit; et tamen hanc causam asseris cur bellum inferas: et ita omnia jura humana divinaque confundas! Sed alia profecto, alia causa est, quæ armat te contra Christianos, et quidem istius Sacrosanctæ Sedis, in qua Vicarium Christi sedere jam oportet, præcipuos perpetuosque cultores. Ex quo in ista sede es, quid arma tua, quid signa Pontificalia, quid Pedum istud Beati Petri, quid navicula egerit, heu! nimis notum est: quæ profecto, quis sit is qui publico adversetur bono, heu! nimium declarant.

"Indue, indue, Beatissime Pater, meliorem mentem; memineris pastoralis officii tui, et Vicariatus Christi; memineris clavium non in istos usus datarum. Quam enim veremur, ne in nostra tempora illud incidat dictum Evangelicum: 'malos male perdet, et vineam suam locabit aliis agricolis!'"—*Pignotti.*

Venice the Medici had a right to expect substantial assistance; but the Venetians had a persevering enemy beyond the Alps, whose advances seemed to threaten more fatal consequences to their state than any change in the Cisalpine governments could possibly involve. The great protection of Venice on this side and against this pressing danger, was the intervening realm of the king of Hungary; to the resolution with which that monarch should oppose the incursions of the ferocious enemy, the Venetians now looked with a breathless anxiety; and when Sixtus, who was supposed to be the natural foe of Mahomet, had united in the attempt to open that passage to the incursions of the Turks; when, at his intercession, the barriers which separated the rich commercial states of Christendom from the greedy rapacity of the Mohammedans were removed, and the wild hordes of Tartars poured through the gap upon the outskirts of Italy; all Europe stood aghast, and learned to comprehend the character of him whom she had placed at the head of her spiritual government, the protector of her religion and the interpreter of its law. Under these circumstances, it was no longer possible to look for aid to Venice, when the Friuli was invaded by a desolating band of fifteen thousand of the soldiers of Mahomet. The first campaign was therefore disastrous to Florence, which had scarcely been consoled for numerous and important losses by a single victory.

On the approach of winter, and during the cessation of hostilities occasioned by the advance of that season, attempts were made to reconcile the differences which had provoked the war; but the return of spring found both parties again in the field with added or recovered confidence. After a succession of unimportant actions, a decisive encounter took place between the forces of the Florentines, under Roberto Malatesta, and the papal army near Perugia. The battle-field was by the Thrasimenian lake; and the memory of ancient

deeds achieved upon that spot, appeared to animate the combatants with a spirit unknown to the battles of those days. Having gained in this contest a decided victory, the Florentine general indulged in the most sanguine expectation of the fall of Perugia, which would probably have terminated the campaign; but a reverse upon the other side of the seat of war even more than counterpoised this advantage.

At the opening of the season the Florentines had been reinforced by the contributions of Venice, which, having concluded a peace with the Turks, had transferred to Florence the services of the able general Carlo da Montone. While the division under the duke of Ferrara was on its way between San Geminiano and Colli, in anticipation of a meeting with the army of the duke of Calabria, Carlo da Montone had been despatched towards Perugia, in the hope that the remains of his father's party in that city might render its reduction little less than a certain conquest. Carlo had died unexpectedly on his march, and the conduct of his troops had been conferred upon Malatesta, who immediately afterwards became victorious at Thrasimene. The duke of Ferrara had suffered himself in the preceding season to be suspected of disaffection to the cause which he sustained, and his command was now divided with Deifobo dell' Anguillara. Availing himself of a difference with his colleague, while the Calabrian general was marching towards them with his troops, the discontented duke withdrew his forces and retired from the field. Discouraged by this defection, though still superior in numerical strength, the army under Anguillara but waited to hear of the approach of the enemy, and flying from the field, on which they abandoned their baggage, their artillery, and all their munitions of war, they rushed back upon Florence, collecting in their flight the terrified population of towns, villages, and country, which appeared at the gates of the capital, and with tidings of defeat and

destruction besought a shelter in her walls. Nothing now appeared to interpose for the protection of the city, which defenceless in consequence of the troops that she had furnished for the armies of the duke of Ferrara and Malatesta, could scarcely have been able to man her walls or to defend her gates. The enemy, however, dwelt at Poggibonzi, which communicated its name to this victory, to divide and to squander the gains of its too easy conquest; and Malatesta, recalled from the enterprize of Perugia, had time to place himself between the city, with its panic-stricken inhabitants, and the march of its victorious enemy.

This important action, therefore, which might have decided the fate not only of this war, but, perhaps, of the Florentine government, produced no other result than a temporary despondency on the part of the vanquished, and an honourable, but certainly not expedient, retirement into winter-quarters on the side of the victors. What seems to render this conduct more unaccountable was the revolution in Milan, which, placing the celebrated Ludovico, called by the Italians il Moro, upon the ducal throne, deprived the Florentines of the most valuable aid on which they had relied during their preceding campaigns. Whatever might be the motive of the Neapolitan and papal cabinets, there was every reason to induce the Florentines, when the herald of the duke of Calabria offered a truce, to accede without hesitation to the proposal. With some prospect of peace, both parties now prepared to remedy the ills and the ravages of war, by attending to those interests which the excitement, the expenses, and the dangers of military undertakings are too apt to expose to neglect.

In the time of Cosimo we have seen the Florentines enduring an oppressive war while the enemy was in the field, and only complaining when, on a cessation of hostilities, they were called to calculate the pecuniary cost of their military equipments. In the present in

stance the same posture of affairs presented a similar excitement in the public mind, when the account of the expenses of the city were to be estimated as increased by the war in which her magistrates had kept her engaged. Now, moreover, the arms of the republic, and that party by which they had been assumed, had nothing to offer as an eqvivalent for pecuniary loss. Defeat had followed defeat, and a single victory had produced results scarcely less to be deplored. All this had been endured by Florence, not that she might be great, not for commercial or political advancement of her citizens, but that the Medici might still continue at the head of her government. Even the personal friends of Lorenzo began to tire of his expensive friendship, and to desire some diminution of the burthens which it entailed. The citizens were terrified; the only feeling which, in the decay of their ancient character, could nerve them to the energy of revolt, had taken possession of their bosoms, and the fear which governed now their minds, seemed more alarming to Lorenzo than all the swords of Naples and all the spiritual missives of the Vatican; he no longer presented the bold front of fearless tyranny, but acknowledged that, even under the basest of excited passions, the power of the people was terrible. When he looked beyond the limits of the republic, and those limits were daily contracting by the encroachments of its enemies, he saw no hope. In Tuscany, Lucca was not friendly to the city over which he presided, and Sienna was her open enemy. Milan, her long and faithful ally, the defender of all her quarrels, had gone over to her enemy; even Venice rejoiced not so secretly over her misfortunes that her joy was concealed from the desponding Florentines; and the two greatest powers next to this, her treacherous and lukewarm friend in Italy, were threatening the renewal of a desolating contest with the return of spring. Lorenzo beheld and fully comprehended this crisis of his fortunes, and his resolution

was equal to the emergency. While his enemies, and those indifferent to his interests or friends of his prosperity, were clamouring aloud against the burthens which the support of his ambition brought on them; and while his real friends and his partizans were relaxing in the earnestness of his justification, or falling away from his cause, he departed suddenly from the city. Soderini and a few of his trusted counsellors were alone privy to his design. From San Miniato he addressed a letter to the Signoria, full of obsequious protestations of fidelity to the government and love for the citizens, and declaring that he had resolved to visit the king of Naples in person, to detach him, if possible, from the friendship of the pope.

This was a hazardous undertaking. Ferdinand was confessedly, perhaps, the most faithless monarch of his day; and the death of Piccinino and others, who, upon the engagement of his word, had placed themselves in his power, might have deterred a cautious politician like Lorenzo from exposing himself to the treachery of a prince so notorious for the violation of every principle, and so little regardful of the observance of private morals and of public right. The importance of the possession of Lorenzo's person to the ambition of this unprincipled sovereign is sufficiently explained by the part which he had borne in the conspiracy of the Pazzi, and by the part he was now bearing in a doubtful and expensive war, with the sole and acknowledged view to the removal of Lorenzo from the guidance of the Florentine government. This generous self-devotion of their favourite recovered all the popularity which he had lost; the Signoria invested him with all the rights and all the dignity of ambassador of the nominal republic. Even this protection did not satisfy the anxious love of the citizens; and when they beheld him return from his perilous errand, bringing peace and safety to their country, with a restoration of the happy calm in which their city had

risen to wealth, and which alone could sustain her industry and her commerce, they could not sufficiently testify their admiration of his intrepidity, and the gratitude which overwhelmed them for this exercise of his talent in their behalf. They might, however, have been less clamorous in their wonder and their love, if they had known the circumstances with which he himself was well acquainted before he ventured his person at the court of Ferdinand.

Lorenzo had not exposed himself without a previous understanding of the desires of the Neapolitan court, or at least of its ministers; he had been in treaty before his departure with the son-in-law of the king, and he might have learned from him that the allies of Ferdinand, grown weary of the contest and wavering in their support, had rendered an honourable peace an object of some importance even to the victorious prince. Before his departure, moreover, Lorenzo may have made a profitable use of his reputation for magnificence and liberality, which was not a less recommendation to the ministers of Ferdinand than to his own partizans at home; it had purchased the liberties of Florence, and we should wonder, indeed, if it were not tried, or, if being tried, it had failed in the cabinet of a treacherous king, or among the satellites of a depraved court. Whatever doubt may involve this part of Lorenzo's conduct, if he neglected so obvious and so powerful a means of preparing his way, or indeed of assuring his personal safety and securing his end, he certainly was not sparing in its use on his arrival at the capital of his long relentless enemy. Three months he remained the guest of the most faithless prince of his day, and among a people the least regardful of moral principle in Italy; yet in all that period he had no reason to believe that a single design had been conceived against his person, his liberty, or his life.

The peace which Lorenzo obtained by this visit to Naples, was neither onerous nor dishonourable in its

conditions. It provided, however, for the release of such of the Pazzi as, not having been executed at the moment of the failure of their conspiracy, had been cast into prison; and this was possibly the most galling to the pride of Lorenzo, though to Florence it can scarcely have appeared worthy to be named as a condition of peace. Venice, the ally of Florence, and Rome, the partner of Naples in the undertaking against the Medici, could not be otherwise than dissatisfied with a treaty formed in this manner without their knowledge, and with an actual and undisguised barter of their interests; a new league was therefore the consequence, founded upon the temporary interests of individual ambition, or on the still more less stable basis of personal feeling.

The animosity which gave birth to this unexpected union and league might have been productive of most unfortunate results to the peace of the Peninsula, and to the commercial prosperity which may now be said to be the only prosperity that it was permitted to enjoy. But in the midst of hostile preparation, the news of the arrival of a powerful Turkish force on the shores of Italy; the cry of the butchered inhabitants of Otranto, which rung in the ears of their affrighted neighbours, and seemed the precursor of a general devastation and slaughter; the preparation of Sixtus to abandon the children of his care, and once again transfer the holy seat to Avignon; the universal consternation, in a word, which the now acknowledged resolution of the Mohammedans to crush the Christian church spread over Christendom—all tended to extinguish those feelings of irritation, under the influence of which the Italians had been enlisted on different sides for a sectional war. It is possible that the panic with which the news of this descent upon their coasts had impressed the governments no less than the people of Italy, would have been terribly justified had it not been almost instantaneously followed by the intelligence of

Mahomet's death. He had been already the conqueror of two empires; he had subjugated twelve kingdoms, and added to his own, thus founded, no less than two hundred cities; the Italians were not, therefore, without reason alarmed at the disembarcation of his savage troops upon their shores; and the general burst of joy which rose from all their cities at the news of his death—the public rejoicings and the official thanksgivings instituted in commemoration of that event, declare how justly he was entitled to the epithet of *the Great*, according to the usage which bestows that name alone upon the scourges of mankind, and which none since the day of the *mighty hunter* had more ruthlessly earned. It is not, perhaps, generally known, that the origin of the title by which the sultans of Constantinople are still designated, is derived from its application to Mahomet II., and that the designation of The Great Turk was first bestowed by the admiration of his subjects and the terror of Europe upon this conqueror. On his decease, the leader of his soldiers in Italy abandoned their conquests in that country, and released its various populations from the well-grounded fear of another barbarian subjugation.

In the midst of his career of conquest, Mahomet had, however, become acquainted with the name and character of Lorenzo de' Medici. The less ferocious means adopted by him for the establishment of his rule and the extension of his power, had not deprived him of the esteem of the Turkish prince, with whom his ambition most probably greatly exalted him; and his long-eluded vengeance was at last to owe its gratification to the friendship of this general enemy of his country, his countryman, and his religion. Bandini, after escaping from Florence and from Italy, on the failure of the conspiracy of the Pazzi, had taken refuge in Constantinople. Here, by order of the sultan, he was seized, and placed in the hands of those to whom his death would be scarcely less welcome than a kingdom

gained. The death of Julian was thus revenged; and Bandini, who had united with the bold and noble race of the Pazzi for the recovery of the Florentine liberty, was not separated from them in the manner of his death. He was executed at Florence by the officious satellites of Lorenzo, while that wily politician was playing the part of ambassador of the Florentine Signoria at Naples.

The death of Mahomet, and the treaty of Lorenzo with the king of Naples, left nothing now to be desired in Italy for a general pacification except the reconciliation of the latter with the pope. Circumstances rendered this no longer a difficulty, and the ambassadors of the same Signoria which had but a short time before denied the papal right, and read a homily upon religion and morality to the pope, now prostrated themselves at his feet, and received as an act of mercy the formal pardon which he was no less anxious to extend than they were solicitous to receive. Such was the solemn farce which the dignity of the church and the majesty of Lorenzo required; and such the end for which Naples, Rome, and Milan, the cities of Tuscany, and the senate of Venice, had been content to risk the lives of thousands, and to sacrifice all those important interests which require the uninterrupted industry of peace. It would be difficult to find, during the era of the true republics, a parallel for such a war and such a peace, however it may be the custom and the interest of venal writers to point to that epoch for evidence of the turbulence and jealousies of republicanism as established during the middle ages in Italy. The various conquests of this unprincipled war were restored on either side; and, with the exception of the loss of life and treasure, all things were put in the condition in which they had stood before the commencement of hostilities. Upon the failure of the well-concerted conspiracy of Riario, the pope, the king of Naples, the archbishop of Pisa, and the noble family of the Pazzi,

against the usurped dominion of the Medici in Florence, when it became apparent that the hopes of that combination had been foiled through the carelessness of those alone for whose benefit it had been formed, we almost lose the power of sympathising with the few who might from time to time be stung to the resolution of attempting yet once again the fortune of another scheme, as it cannot be doubted that each abortive effort but fastened now with double strength the fitted yoke.

Battista Frescobaldi had been Florentine consul at Constantinople during part of the reign of Mahomet, and, as such, had been the instrument of transmitting the person of Bandini to his government. In this unhappy office, we observe no evidence of reluctance on the part of Frescobaldi to the performance of the duty which consigned his heroic prisoner into the hands of his executioner; yet scarcely do we find him in Florence before we discover him, in his turn, at the head of a conspiracy for the assassination of Lorenzo and the overthrow of his rule. The failure of his plan produced, as he should have anticipated, the ruin of his few imprudent friends, with additional conviction to the citizens of the fitness and necessity of Lorenzo's government.

The brief moment of Italy's peace, which had been a moment of terror and disgraceful consternation, was again to be succeeded by internal wars. The league of Venice and the church, rendered vain as to the purposes for which it had been formed, by the removal of the interdict from Florence and the temporary reconciliation of Lorenzo, was yet to bring forth its fruits. The little state of the duke of Ferrara opened to both a new promise of advantage and aggrandizement. To the pope it was desirable as a permanent dominion for the count Riario, whose territories were now altogether unequal to his uncle's ambition; and to Venice it held out the invitation to territorial gain, the constantly

coveted object of her desires, limited as she was by nature to her marshes and her canals. Uncertain, then, to which side the spoil should belong, both parties were willing to defer the adjustment of that question till they should have obtained possession of the prize. On this occasion it is easy to observe that the cunning of Venice had over-reached the eager ambition of Sixtus, for she indeed had little to apprehend from Riario on the death of his uncle, which age and infirmity rendered imminent; while he on his side had every thing to fear from their unhesitating greediness of empire, when the election of a new pontiff should take from him the protection of the papal authority.

Historians of that period dwell at length upon the pomp with which Riario himself was received by the grave senators of the crafty aristocracy; nor, as a modern author observes, is the account of it useless among the records of the times, as indicating the intercourse of pride and vanity which had succeeded and superseded the simple communication of popular magistrates during the republican eras. The war of conquest was now formally declared against the petty prince who governed as sovereign, with the common and favourite title of duke, the little city and state of Ferrara. But insignificant as this dominion might be in itself, it became of paramount importance in the eyes of the Florentines as an appendage to the empire of the Venetian senate or to the states of the church. Florence, therefore, publicly and instantly declared herself the ally of the former general of her forces; and by virtue of their recent treaty, Naples and Milan took part on the same side in the quarrel. The duke of Calabria now marched into the territory of Sixtus, and for a moment every thing appeared to threaten the ruin of the papal cause. Venice, however, despatched to the aid of her ally a reinforcement in the person of her leader Roberto Malatesta, who easily retrieved

her affairs and enabled her to assume the offensive against her enemies in the South.

The career of victory, which it is possible Malatesta might have pursued against the duke of Calabria in the territory of the king of Naples, was cut short by his premature death, occasioned by his imprudence after the battle of Velletri, in which he had entirely routed the enemies' forces. Having exerted and greatly heated himself in the action, he swallowed large draughts of water, which, bringing on a violent dysentery, occasioned his death. It was expected that Sixtus and the Roman court would manifest a heartfelt regret at the loss of so excellent and successful a defender of their cause; but Malatesta was himself, as well as the duke of Ferrara, the possessor of a territory and dominion coveted by the inordinate desires of the sovereign pontiff; and not even the outward show of sorrow appeared to counteract the common suspicion that Malatesta had been unfairly dealt with by those whom he had rescued from ruin, for his inheritance of Rimini. Among the most remarkable incidents of that age, the consequences of the death of this illustrious leader were not the least singular; but they are, moreover, of infinite importance to the reader of history, as strikingly indicative of the degraded state of public morals and national faith. The Florentines, whose allies had been disgracefully beaten by the valour and skill of Malatesta, were compelled upon his death to send a guard from their own forces to protect his wife and son in the dominion which he had left to them—to save them from the grasp of the unprincipled ecclesiastic, whose defence he had assumed and in whose service he had died. So eager, indeed, was the joy of Sixtus, even while celebrating the obsequies of his fallen soldier, that not the respect which the papal character extorted from those who lived within the pale of the church, was strong enough to curb the suspicion that Malatesta had been the victim of his em-

ployer's want of faith, or prevent the loud and frequent expression of this injurious suspicion.

In the meantime the armies of Venice closely invested Ferrara; and while the forces of the church were giving employment to the arms of Naples and Florence, the Ferrarese, abandoned to contend with the unequal power of the Venetians, were about to yield to their resistless attack. At this moment Sixtus opened his eyes to the idleness of the hope by which he had been cajoled into this unprofitable war. He perceived his own inevitable loss, and he comprehended the equally inevitable gain of Venice, with which the church had never been united but in temporary league; and which, indeed, had always been numbered among the least subservient to its interest and obedient to its will.

We are now about to take leave of our chief authority, in the examination of the contemporary writers upon whom we have relied in the foregoing portions of our history. In all discrepancies, whether in matters of opinion or of fact, where other writers have differed, the penetrating mind of Macchiavelli has enabled us to arrive at such conclusions as have seemed, with the assistance of his knowledge, little less than inevitable. We have followed him, therefore, with care, to that portion of his history in which he abandons the task of chronicling his country's shame, and we shall hardly find his equal as a guide in the portion that remains to us still. In presenting the reader, therefore, with an outline of the new condition of affairs in the Italian peninsula—of the new interests which formed new leagues, and gave origin to new wars and to new combinations, we shall avail ourselves of a comprehensive extract from the last book of his History of Florence.

It has already been observed, that many reasons had been pressed upon Sixtus to cause him, however without a pretence, to abandon his unnatural connexion

with the senate of Venice: "Whilst these things were in agitation at Rome and in Romagna, the affairs of the marquis of Ferrara began to have a bad aspect, and the Venetians daily conceived greater hopes of stripping him of his dominions. On the other hand, the king of Naples and the Florentines used their utmost endeavours to reduce the pope to reason; but not being able to effect that by dint of arms, they threatened him with a general council, which already had been summoned by the emperor to assemble at Basil. This determined his Holiness to come to an accommodation with the league: for which purpose he sent a nuncio to Naples, where a confederacy was concluded for five years betwixt the pope, king Ferdinand, and the duke of Milan, with liberty for the Venetians to join in it within a certain time if they pleased. After he had proceeded thus far, he sent to give the Venetians to understand that they must desist from hostilities against the Ferrarese: but they were so far from complying with these dictates, that they began to make preparations for continuing the war with greater vigour; and having defeated the combined forces of the duke and the marquis in an action near Argenta, they advanced so near to Ferrara that their army encamped in a park belonging to the marquis, and almost under the walls of the city. The league therefore resolved to trifle no longer, but to send effectual supplies to the assistance of that prince, and accordingly gave orders to the duke of Calabria to march directly with the army under his command, in conjunction with the pope's, towards Ferrara. The Florentines likewise sent all their forces to his succour. and to settle the future operations of the war, the league appointed a congress of their several ministers to be held at Cremona. in consequence of which, a legate from the pope, count Girolamo, the duke of Calabria, Ludovico Sforza, Lorenzo de' Medici, and several other Italian princes, assembled at that city, in order to

concert proper measures for their conduct in the ensuing campaign.

"The Venetians, seeing all Italy thus confederated against them, took the duke of Reno, with two hundred cuirassiers or heavy-armed horse that were under his command, into their service, in order to put a little better face upon their affairs: and having received news that their fleet was dispersed, they sent this commander with one part of their army to face the enemy, whilst San Severino passed the Adda with the other and marched towards Milan, in favour, as he pretended, of the young duke and his mother Madonna Bona; but really in hopes of raising an insurrection there by these means: as he thought Ludovico's manner of governing had made him odious to the people. This invasion, at first, threw the citizens of Milan into such consternation that they all took up arms; but in the end produced an effect very different from what the Venetians expected: for it determined Ludovico to comply with what he had before so obstinately refused, and to grant the forces of the allies a passage through the Milanese: so that the confederates succeeded in almost all their undertakings during the summer of this year.

"The ensuing winter having passed without any event worthy of relation, both armies took the field again early in the spring; and the confederates had drawn all their forces together, with a resolution to strike some bold and sudden stroke that should put an end to the war: and if things had been conducted with the same prudence that they were the year before, they would certainly have stripped the Venetians of all their dominions in Lombardy. But as it generally happens, where there are several commanders of equal power in the same army, that dissensions arise amongst them, to their own prejudice and the great advantage of the enemy, so it fell out at this time; for after the death of Frederic Gonzaga, marquis of Mantua, great

animosities and jealousies ensued betwixt the duke of Calabria and Ludovico Sforza, who had been kept in good friendship and harmony together, by his authority, whilst he lived. Giovanni Galeazzo, duke of Milan, was now of age to take the reins of government into his own hands, and as he had married the duke of Calabria's daughter, that prince was desirous that his son-in-law should oblige his uncle Ludovico to lay down his authority, and take the administration of the state upon himself: but Ludovico, perceiving his design, resolved, if possible, to prevent it.

"The Venetians being aware of these suspicions in Ludovico, determined to make their advantage of them, hoping they should be able to gain more by a peace (as they always had done), than they had lost in the war. With this view, they privately made some overtures to Ludovico, and at last concluded a treaty with him in August 1484: of which his confederates being soon informed, were not a little mortified at it; especially when they found they should be obliged to restore all the towns they had taken from the Venetians, and that the latter would not only remain in possession of the Polesine of Rovigo, which they had wrested out of the marquis of Ferrara's hands, but of all the pre-eminence and authority which they formerly had over the city of Ferrara itself. To these conditions, however, they were forced to submit, as they grew tired of the burden of the war, and did not care to tempt fortune any further, lest they should expose themselves to still greater dangers and losses, through the defection of some, or ambition of others.

"After the peace was concluded in Lombardy, all commotions ceased, except in Tuscany and at Rome: for the pope, being either worn out with old age, or too much agitated in his mind at the thoughts of a peace (to which he had been so obstinately averse) died five days after the publication of it, leaving all the rest of Italy in tranquillity at his death, though he had kept

it continually embroiled in war and contentions whilst he lived."

The election of Innocent VIII., who succeeded Sixtus, was expected to give that peace to Italy which the intriguing and ambitious character of his predecessor had denied to her during the whole course of his rule. A hundred instances had not been sufficient to teach the Italians that the possession of the tempting power wielded by a spiritual sovereign, must outweigh even the force of early character and habitual indulgence. Innocent was soon as deeply interested, if not as deeply versed, in the politics of the Italian states, as the crafty prelate by whom he had been preceded in the chair of St. Peter. The unpopularity of the reigning house in the kingdom of Naples, afforded him an early opportunity of unfolding his views, or, as it ought rather to be said, of developing the invariable policy of the church, under its new administration.

It now became the turn of Naples to beg for the friendship of Florence, and to invoke the aid of that power which she had before been pledged to subvert, against the greater and more specious ambition of a tyranny, whose instrument she now found herself to have been in the part which she had borne against the Medici. The citizens of this republic, however, had too recently escaped from the dangers and expenses of war; they refused, therefore, to mingle in the disputes which did not seem to them connected with the advancement of their interests. Lorenzo had now, indeed, to think for his people; he had assumed the whole charge of the civil and political governance of the city; the populace had, by acknowledging their unfitness to manage the affairs of their government, become unfit in reality; they had reduced themselves, in short, to that condition when, as it has been admirably observed, the happiness of a people becomes an accident dependent upon the character of its prince. While we turn with disgust from the arts with which

we behold this popular favourite abusing the love and confidence of his fellow-citizens to the ruin of themselves and their state, we cannot deny the ability and the indefatigable zeal with which he set himself to watch over their foreign relations, involving interests which, indeed, while they concerned the public, may be considered as no less his own than those which appertained to his ledger and his counting-house. The importance of preserving in the South a balance of power, to operate as a check upon the growing influence of the papal court as a temporal sovereignty, and, perhaps, still more the policy of supporting that branch of the Aragonese family which had there established its dynasty against the renewal of any claims which might be advanced upon the side of France; all this, to Lorenzo, counterpoised and far indeed outweighed the disadvantage of again interrupting the commercial speculations which the promise of peace had set afloat within the busy city of which the government had been confided to his charge. Aided by the Venetians, and still more by the discontents in the kingdom of Naples, Innocent began the war against his feudatories, as he pretended to consider the princes of the house of Calabria. But, if he found his account in fomenting the revolt of the disaffected barons in the South, he was also harassed in his own dominions by the fears of a rebellion, that would have been much more fatal to him than that which he had borne so great a part in exciting against Frederic, could reasonably be expected to prove to that monarch. The deep intrigues of Lorenzo in his very court, deprived him of that confidence which was absolutely necessary to enable him to meet the forces of his open enemy; and to these, much more than to the arms which Venice had furnished under the conduct of San Severino, must be attributed the willingness of Innocent to accede to the offers of peace which were held out on the side of his adversaries. With nothing of moment to character-

ize a war in which all Italy had been partitioned for aggression or defence, after a few months the treaty of peace which was to restore the *statu quo* was signed, and the Florentines, freed from an oppressive foreign war for a remote political principle, were left at leisure to pursue the contest, for territorial aggrandizement, on the limits of their proper dominion. In all the struggles which occupied them, as we have seen, they had at the same time been engaged in a contest with the Genoese concerning the city or town of Sarzana. In the former wars which Lorenzo had cost the Florentines, this place had fallen into the possession of Genoa, the government of which city had transferred it to a company of bankers for a considerable sum of money. In all the time which elapsed between this event and the consummation of the peace of 1486, the earnest endeavours of the Florentine administration to recover the valuable possession had been vain, though not for a moment had it withdrawn its desires or its cares from the attainment of this end; and while it ventured upon equal terms to contest the political supremacy now with the court of Rome, now with that of Naples, and again with the imposing force of the Venetian aristocracy, it had been unable to overcome the resistance of the mercenary force kept on foot by the directors of the bank of St. George. Having secured a moment of peace with its more powerful antagonists, it now was enabled to array so powerful a force against this place as to render all resistance vain; and, to the great satisfaction of Lorenzo, the inhabitants resolved to submit to his arms without experiencing their power in a general assault.

Florence, and indeed all Italy, had had too many and too recent proofs of the little faith of its rulers, to hope for the advantage of a stable peace, against the manifest and present interest of those whose word now made or interrupted it. It became, therefore, the care of Lorenzo, in this treaty with the pope, to unite, if pos-

sible, the interests of that prelate with the advancement of his own desires. The great secret of all the intrigues of the Vatican had been for many years conducted with a single view to the establishment of the relatives of each of the successive occupants of the holy seat. Sixtus had scarcely felt it necessary to disguise his ambition; and Innocent, if in some degree less daring, had legitimate children for whose establishment he might more openly avail himself of the means which his holy office placed at his control. As the nature, however, of the papal office was incompatible with hereditary succession, and as the family interests of each new pontiff required the removal of those who in the same right had secured the protection of the church before, the only certain mode of building up a lasting nobility which presented itself to the popes, was to make their passing rule an instrument of uniting their nearest of kin to some of the powerful families which governed the various states within the Alps. Thus, and thus only, could hereditary powers and honours be secured to the children and nephews of the great spiritual sovereign

Resolved upon the accomplishment of his purpose, Lorenzo addressed himself to the passion which he knew had for so many successions dominated the hearts of all the papal sovereigns. He proposed, therefore, to Innocent a union of their families by the marriage of his daughter Maddalena with Franceschetto Cibo, a son of the pope. The hour of his death was, however, drawing rapidly nigh, and as his father's decease had been succeeded or followed within a short period by that of his principal contemporaries, so with him were passing from the scene in which they had borne so conspicuous a part the principal actors in the political drama, whose catastrophe was the conversion of Italy into a battle-field for the contests of individual ambition. The cardinal Riario had too long been accustomed to exercise the authority with which his un-

cle's office had reflectively invested him, to adapt himself, immediately upon the death of Sixtus, to the limited power that he was still entitled, as lord of Imola and Forli, to exercise among the larger states by which his narrow territories were environed. Still less had he been able to moderate the tone of pride with which he had been accustomed to govern his subjects, and which they had felt themselves under the necessity of enduring from the nephew of the pope. When the respect, or we must rather believe the fear, of that name no longer held them in check, the people of Forli resolved to bear no longer the insolence of his pride; and he who had been the principal agent in the conspiracy which the tyranny of Lorenzo de' Medici had provoked before, fell now the victim of a similar plot contrived and executed for the same cause against himself. No sooner was it known that he had fallen, than all the city declared in favour of his murderer; but the citadel held out for his family and for Caterina Sforza his wife, who claimed the government or regency for her child. This woman had fallen into the hands of the citizens, who presented her to the officer in command of the citadel, declaring that they would accept nothing as the ransom of her life except the unconditional surrender of the place. With all the boldness of her character, Caterina heard this annunciation of her fate with trembling, and placing her children as hostages in the hands of her still infuriated subjects, she entreated permission to enter within the citadel, and to dispose those in possession of its walls, by yielding that which they could not retain, to save the life of the mother of their infant and fatherless sovereign. Her entreaties moved the heart of the populace; and while they held her children in their hands, they could not fear that the mother would redeem her own person by exposing them to death. She was permitted, therefore, to enter within the protection of her faithful citadel. The next moment they

beheld her on the walls, and heard her while she demanded the submission of her rebellious subjects without, encouraging to still further resistance the resolution of those who had thus far supported her rights and those of her family. To the declaration that the hostages which she had thus abandoned must undergo the penalty due to her perfidy, she listened with indifference. Even the sight of her offspring led out to suffer, failed to move the firm determination of this woman, born to reign; she placed her hand upon her breast, and laying bare that fountain of life to the gaze of the multitude, "There is yet here wherewithal," said she, "to nourish an heir to the sovereignty which I now vindicate, and which I am resolved to transmit to my children."*

"At this resolute behaviour," says Macchiavelli, "the principal conspirator d'Orso and his accomplices were so discouraged (especially when they saw the pope did not support them, and that Ludovico Sforza, the countess's uncle, was sending a body of forces to her relief) that they packed up as many of their most valuable effects as they could carry off, and retired to Castello. Upon which the countess, having recovered the government of the state, severely punished the inhabitants for their rebellion: and the Florentines, hearing of the count's death, took advantage of that opportunity to make an attempt upon the castle of Piancaldoli which he had formerly taken from them: for which purpose, they sent some troops thither and soon made themselves masters of it; though with the loss

* "The conspirators accordingly relying upon her word, permitted her to go thither · but as soon as she was got safe into the citadel, she altered her tone, and sent them word she would use her utmost endeavours to bring them all to the most cruel death she could invent, in revenge for the murder of her husband: and when they, on the other hand, threatened to kill her children, she courageously made answer, 'they might deal with them as they pleased, for she knew how to provide herself with more.'"—*Farneworth's Macchiavelli.*

of Ciecco, one of the most celebrated architects and engineers of his time."

The more pacific character of the successor of Sixtus, and the death of the uncontrollable nephew of that prelate, gave to Italy a season of peace, which she had not known for many years. The life of Lorenzo, it is believed, was necessary to the conservation of this state of affairs, and the important political changes that succeeded his decease give colour to the opinion. But Lorenzo had reached already the verge of his existence; and those who examine the state of the Transalpine cabinets, will hardly believe that the petty tyrant of a little principality could have arrested the course of those events which the jarring interests of the courts of England, France, and Spain, made requisite.

In the meanwhile all that might appear to conduce to the desirable end of maintaining a good understanding among the Italian cities, was sought after by those who believed themselves principally interested in the preservation of peace. Lorenzo, as we have seen, had won the church to his interest, and to favour his usurpation, by giving his daughter in marriage to the son of Innocent; and a similar union had long been contemplated between the ducal house of Milan and the sovereign princes of Naples. This measure, intended to secure the permanence of so desirable a peace within the Alps, resulted with a very contrary effect, and became the immediate cause of those great changes, which, commencing with the arrival of Charles VIII. in Italy, subverted her ancient state, and rendered vain the subtleties of her politics for the preservation of her independent rank and influence among the nations of Europe. Yet for a moment the thick population of the whole peninsula believed in the flattering hope of a lasting tranquillity, and rested satisfied with the now irrecoverable loss of their liberties, in the prospect of a gentle exercise of that sovereignty

which they had transferred to princes and chiefs of their own choice and creation. In the midst of these pleasing illusions, Lorenzo de' Medici was seized with an attack of the gout, inherited from his father; and just as a new era for Florence, for Italy, and for the world, was beginning to dawn, this prince and master of the ancient regimen was called from the scene of his greatness, his hopes, and his pride. This event occurred in the month of April of the year 1492.

To Lorenzo de' Medici, however we may consider the report of his name to be exaggerated by flattery or by ignorance, we still have one acknowledgment to make; and we cannot, even on account of this very exaggeration, allow the epoch of his rule in Florence to pass without a special notice in the history of that city. From the tenour of the foregoing pages the political condition of the still miscalled republic is to be inferred by the reader; but the highest glory of the Medicean age consists in the revival of letters, attributed by the Italians in a great measure to the encouragement afforded by Lorenzo and his father to those who, devoting themselves to literary pursuits, abandoned to them the conduct of the political concerns of their country. Many years before, the writings of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, had secured to the Italian language a pre-eminence to which the imitations of the fathers of English, French, and Spanish literature bear witness, and which has coloured the productions of the proudest era of English poetry with the characteristics of Italian manners and Italian feeling. An unfortunate influence, exercised by authority of these unequalled names, in the next generation resulted in little less than the ruin of Italian letters for the just reviving language of the ancient Romans. From this time till the moment of Lorenzo's accession, not a single name adds lustre to the literature created by the efforts of the three Florentines; an humble imitation of the few recovered relics of the Augustan age was

received for the highest exercise of native genius; and all the patronage of Cosimo had failed to add a single work to the small catalogue of Italy's national literature. Here then was the superiority which elevated the son above the glory of his father, and in some measure justifies the title of the Magnificent, which a too obsequious age bestowed on him. We do not certainly believe that the extensive encouragement held out to the learned of his court by Lorenzo, was the single fruit of a disinterested admiration of talent applied to the acquisition of knowledge, or that the fostering care which he bestowed upon the ripening attempts of more ambitious geniuses was the result alone of a desire for the promotion of his country's glory; but Lorenzo certainly had less need of courting the acquiescence of the learned than Cosimo had had; and the preference which he manifested for those who devoted themselves to the building up of a new literature to adorn and illustrate the language of his country, indicates a boldness and originality which we seek in vain in the character of his father. The names of Pulci and Poliziano, which we find as those of the favourites of his hours of leisure, outweigh themselves the whole catalogue of all who preceded them from the time of Boccaccio and Petrarch; and still more recommend the fame of their patron to the regard of posterity in the impulse which their efforts communicated to the age. Though fluctuating and variable, Italian literature, from the era of the publication of the works of Poliziano and the Morgante Maggiore, has never had an era to which we turn in vain for some illustrious name; and the glories of the succeeding years, which gave to Italy the works of Boiardo, Ariosto, and Tasso, instead of the barren copies of a half-barbarous Latin, are a part of the debt of Florence to Lorenzo de' Medici; a part, however, which has been greatly overrated, and which must, after all, appear of small account in comparison with the injury

done by his ambition to her declining liberties. Lorenzo himself was the author of a few light but pleasing productions. Court sycophancy over-valued them in his life-time, and the affected admiration of a modern writer, whose work appears to have been composed in a spirit scarcely less dignified, has been unable to obtain for them that consideration which his undiscriminating praise appears to indicate as their due; if judged, however, by the influence which they exercised as the productions of the great arbiter of the Italian states, and by the part which they bore in this manner in the revival of Italian letters, they become, indeed, subjects of a higher eulogium, and deserve for their author the gratitude of all who glory in the advancement and the prosperity of Italian literature.

The last days of Lorenzo's life were an uninterrupted triumph. His union with Innocent opened, as he had expected it would do, the way to still farther honours for his family; and almost one of the latest gratifications with which his new ally sought to pamper his vanity, was the elevation of his son to the cardinalate before the age at which it was usual to receive that distinguished honour. The policy of Lorenzo, therefore, in uniting himself to the family of Innocent and the interests of Rome, may be considered as the cause of the pontificate of Leo, and of all the remarkable events which characterize that brilliant era. Lorenzo died at his villa at Careggi, in the forty-fourth year of his age, after a prosperous rule, which may justly be denominated a reign, leaving three sons to succeed to his wealth and his name. Piero, indeed, was intended as a successor at the same time to his power; but this was only hereditary so far as the son should inherit the ability of his father. Giovanni, who had been made a Cardinal, became Leo X. As the intended successor did not, however, possess any portion of the character required to hold the arduous rule sustained by Lorenzo, and as the Florentines were well aware of his inca-

pacity, they naturally turned with regret upon the decease of his father; the latter years of whose life had given them the enjoyment of an almost perfect peace; and looked with anxiety to the storms and disasters, which the unfitness of his son to wield the too heavy sceptre transmitted to his hands, would bring again upon their country. During the long period in which the Medici had been rising to that eminence which we have seen them attain, both in Florence and among the other cities of Italy, in the time of Cosimo and Lorenzo, the withdrawal of the ultramontane princes from the domestic disputes of the Italians had been in no inconsiderable degree a cause of the prosperity of their commerce and arts. The kingdom of Naples alone had offered the incentive to French and Spanish ambition for mingling in the affairs of the peninsula; and even this interference was not calculated to embroil the states of Italy in difficulties with these Transalpine courts. When the princes of Anjou and Aragon advanced their opposite claims, they never pretended other than personal rights, without contemplating the annexation of the kingdom of Naples as a part or a province of the dominions subject to the crown of Spain or France. At last, however, the pretensions of the Anjevine princes, weak as they were, descended to the king of France, a monarch who could not for a moment be supposed to value them in comparison with his inherited crown, but who estimated them at their full worth as affording a pretext for stretching the dominions of ambitious France beyond the limits within which nature had bounded them. It required, however, that Italy should be untrue to herself in order that the feeble claims, transmitted by a subject to the king of France, should enable that monarch to pass the barriers that seemed piled by the creator himself for the defence of Italy against the insinuation of foreign influence or the invasion of foreign force.

This country, in spite of its divisions and intestine

dissentions, had been increasing in power and wealth from the time that it had shaken off the yoke of the German emperors, till it had concentrated the riches of all the world and become the centre of civilization to Europe. The names by which its history is adorned or distinguished, at least during the greater part of the middle ages, though reverenced beyond the Alps, were confined in their actual influence to the country bounded by those mountains, and by the inland seas which had for so many ages been the only waters acquainted with the rich barks of the boldest navigators. The history of Italy appears apart from that of all the world, at least from that of Christendom, for all political purposes; and her treaties, her wars, her alliances, her whole political system, in fine, regarded the Mediterranean, the Adriatic, and the Alps, as the boundaries of the world; the ambition of a duke of Milan, a popular favourite in Florence, a king of Naples, or even of a duke of Ferrara, seemed to be, and was indeed, of more importance to the Italians than the revolutions of England, France, and Germany, and the formation of unlimited empires beyond the borders of their well-guarded country. Perhaps the prudence of Lorenzo de' Medici for a moment repressed the jealousies of the various princes who had now usurped dominion in the different cities of Italy, and counteracted the natural tendency of their mutual fears to fortify themselves by alliance of powers seated beyond the influence of Cisalpine revolutions; at all events it has added not a little to his fame, that he did not live to witness or partake in the infamous feuds which brought upon Italy the flood of foreign arms and foreign influence, and laid that beautiful and happy country open to the greedy desires, the artful policy, and the savage ferocity of powerful nations, in the collision of whose interests her own could not fail to be crushed. To this result the pacific character of Innocent, and the crafty forbearance of Ferdinand of Naples, had greatly con-

duced in opposition to the headstrong violence of Ludovico of Milan. The removal of these two influential characters from the political field almost immediately after that of Lorenzo de' Medici, prepared the way for the final overthrow of the system so long pursued by them, and on which the preservation of Italian independence now hung by a feeble thread. During the pupilage of the duke of Milan, his uncle had exercised as a nominal regency the sovereign authority in Lombardy; the ward, however, now twenty years of age, incited by his father-in-law Alphonso of Calabria, demanded the cession of the reins which had been guided till then in his name, but with no regard to his interest, by his uncle. Ludovico looked before he resolved upon the final measures which his condition appeared to require. In Florence, the accession of Piero de' Medici promised him little support; the vanity of that young aspirant had bound him to the party of the Neapolitan king, and the regent of Milan beheld no alternative for himself but that of abdication or deposition.

At this moment the claims of Charles VIII. appeared to be the only hope on which he could rely for support. The fatal embassy departed from Milan; and Charles, at the instigation of the faithless regent, prepared for his famous descent upon Italy. Upon the result of this invasion the last safety of this aspiring traitor now was cast; had Charles retired from the field, a union of princes in Italy would have crushed the unprincipled ambition which had not hesitated to endanger the common independence for the satisfaction of a personal revenge, or the doubtful establishment of a new dynasty in Lombardy. In the fear that France might possibly refuse to second the ardour of her prince, Ludovico endeavoured to involve in a similar predicament the other princes who might be dealt with by an appeal to their hopes or their fears. He persuaded, therefore, the impatient monarch, as indispensable to his success, that he should obtain from

the principal cities which lay in the way of his march a declaration of favour to his claims, particularly insisting that an insignificant force should be furnished by the Florentines in augmentation of his numbers as a token of adherence to his cause. Charles was not backward to act upon this suggestion, and Piero had scarcely assumed the arduous task of directing the destinies of his native city,—a task rendered more arduous by the magnificent manner in which it had been performed by his father,—when he was called upon to choose between the enmity of Naples or of France; the one most to be dreaded as a domestic foe, the other an exterminating enemy, which, if he should pass the mountains or the sea, not the power of Florence, but the efforts of all Italy might prove insufficient to resist. Piero was unequal to the emergency; he did not dare to refuse the feeble aid demanded by the king of France; an aid not wanted, as he himself understood, but for the purpose of implicating him in the quarrel of the foreigner against his natural allies, and securing his neutrality in the contest which should ensue. Alarmed at the dilemma in which the arts of Ludovico had thus embarrassed him, he turned to Alphonso. He assured him that the contribution which Charles demanded as a quota from Florence, could scarcely be considered as any increase of the force to be arrayed against Naples; while that, as an ally of the invader, he might always act as a mediator in behalf of those with whom his interest and his feelings united him. Alphonso, fearing the effect of such an example, refused his assent to a scheme devised by cowardice and to be executed by treachery; so that Piero still found himself under the necessity of choosing between the distant danger and the neighbouring ruin. In the meanwhile a thousand accidents arose to delay the expedition of Charles, and to make the situation of Ludovico but little less uneasy than that of the tyrant of Florence. Piero, however, had in France two person-

al enemies as unceasing in their instigations as the regent of Milan, whom political interests alone had urged to the infamous measure of calling into Italy the natural enemies of her prosperity.

Among the numerous members of the Medicean family were the brothers Lorenzo and Giovanni, remote connexions of the ruling branch. While yet Lorenzo the Magnificent, in the name of a principal citizen, held the reins of government, Piero, presuming on his inheritance, had assumed, even towards the members of his own family, an air of authority and pride, which they, exalted by the same influence, could scarcely be expected to bear. A difference had already arisen between the proud cousins of the prince and the vain expectant of his transmissible power. The latter had directed his addresses, perhaps not very honourably intended, to a beautiful young Florentine girl, who had already inspired the bosom of Giovanni with an ardent affection. The son of Lorenzo expected to find all those upon whom his father now looked as his subjects, obsequious servants of his will. On the other hand, the warmth of the young lover's passion was perhaps excited additionally by the stimulus of such an opposition; and the attentions which at first had been the offering of passion at the altar of love, became the defiance of an uncompromising pride. After various indications of a resolution upon either side to fight upon this theme, both parties met, upon occasion of some festival, in the presence of the fair object of their desires and not less the subject of their excited pride. Piero, by his attentions, succeeded in keeping aloof all others whom the beauty of the young creature would have attracted to her side. One individual, however, regardless of the evident displeasure of her princely admirer, still attended her steps, and, eager in his service, appeared resolved to match the earnestness of his devotion against the condescending regard with which the son of Lorenzo proffered

his love. The mask which concealed the features of the young and zealous devotee was not intended to conceal his person from the knowledge of Piero, or to shield him from the fear of his anger; every word and every gesture revealed the long-unyielding rival; and Piero, braved in his vanity as deeply as in his passion, after a feeble struggle with his better feelings and his calmer judgment, abandoned to his fury all the government of his actions. While the ill-repressed tempest, half governed and half victorious, still struggled in the bosom of the prince, an officious tender of service, too graciously received, on the part of the insolent subject, bore away the last guard which prudence had interposed between the rage of Piero and the fate of his insolent subject. As they stood face to face confronting each other, Piero extended his arm, and tearing the mask from the face of his rival, exposed the well-known countenance of his kinsman, burning with anger and shame, to the gaze of the throng and to the contempt of such a wrong inflicted and received. At the same instant the dagger of the young lover glittered before the eyes of the terrified multitude, and in the next appeared to be buried in the bosom of his adversary. Piero, however, was well fitted for the part of a regal tyrant which he was born to assume; with less boldness, and with less real sagacity and prudence, he had more of the common caution of cowardice than his father; nor did he ever expose himself to the issue of a quarrel such as this, without some security in addition to that which he derived from the name of his parent. To the astonishment of all who had witnessed the blow which his angry kinsman had dealt against him, and who had expected from its violence to behold the dagger in the bosom of the aggressor, Piero but reeled beneath its strength; the hidden mail with which he had provided himself, and which was constantly worn by him as a protection for his insolent assumption of authority, had blunted the point of his antagonist's weapon, and

saved the person of its wearer from all but the stigma of the blow.

Exasperated by this insult, and forgetting that his own aggression had brought it justly on his head, the heir apparent to a power little less than sovereign wanted the magnanimity to forgive and the prudence to dissemble. He cast himself upon the authority of his father, and demanded the death of his cousin. Lorenzo might have found, had he been willing to make the experiment, sufficient obsequiousness in those who still pretended to be his fellow-citizens to obtain sentence of death against one who had, though in manifest defence of his person, directed a blow at the life of his son; and there is no reason to think Lorenzo himself was withheld by any conscientious spirit of right; but the light quarrel of a lover did not appear to him sufficient ground for renewing the personal hatred to his family, which in the time of the Pazzi had been so much more dangerous to his state than all the little that remained of public virtue. The manifest favour of the populace in this case loudly expressed for Giovanni, perhaps induced the dictator and arbiter of life and death in Florence to smother the displeasure which such an open disregard of the dignity of his acknowledged heir had occasioned him. He was satisfied, therefore, to obtain sentence of banishment against the offender, in whose disgrace another of his family, the Lorenzo mentioned above, was made to participate. Escaping from the place to which they had been exiled, the young Florentines made their way to France, and there they now revenged their former wrong by stirring up the king to the enterprise proposed by Ludovico the regent of Milan. They assured him that not Florence, but Piero de' Medici, was in league with the Aragonese family which now possessed the throne he coveted; and that the Florentines, besides desiring his friendship, would gladly release themselves by his means from the disgraceful bondage into which they

found themselves fallen. So much did the representations of personal enmity, justified in this instance, operate upon the mind of Charles, that when, at last, the conduct of Florence compelled him to a declaration of hostility, he waged an exclusive war upon Piero, by confiscating all of his property invested in France or in the cities conquered by her arms, and by sparing that which belonged to every other citizen of Florence. The result of this measure was to show the Florentines to what expense and what imminent danger their support of the Medicean rule must inevitably reduce them. To the earnest representations of these exiles—to the more secret, but still more authoritative instigations of the ambitious Ludovico; to the promptings of the adventurous spirit of the monarch and the hope of territorial aggrandizement, was added the solicitation of another individual destined to bear a conspicuous part on the theatre of Italian politics, and who could not be silent in this opening scene of the last drama of her independence. This was the cardinal of St. Peter in Vincola, afterwards Julius II., equally, says a celebrated historian, the scourge of his country as cardinal and as pope. The personal dislike of Alexander had driven him by persecution into banishment; so that the faults of that infamous prelate divided with the selfish ambition of Ludovico the shame of having brought an invader upon Italy, and violated the independence which had remained even in the wreck of her liberties. How insignificant appears the cause compared with the result! The whole desire of the prelate was to involve in difficulties the ruler of the church, by whose persecutions he had been driven from Italy. When, in spite of all the obstacles opposed to its adoption, the resolution to pass the Alps had been formally taken by Charles, ambassadors were sent in his name to demand a passage for his troops through such of the Italian states as should lie in the way of the route which it might become ex-

pedient for him to take. Many cities temporized, and many gave ambiguous excuses; but Florence was expected to return a prompt and explicit reply. The majority of the most influential citizens, convinced of the folly of resistance, advised the immediate concession of all that Charles had thought proper to demand; but Piero urged the treaty by which Florence had bound herself to Naples, and dismissed the ambassadors of the king with a refusal which he might construe into a defiance.

The heat of Charles' impetuosity was wisely regulated by the prudence of his counsellors. They demonstrated to him the expediency of distinguishing in his resentment between Piero and his subjects, in such a manner as to win them to his interest while he converted them at the same time from the love of his adversary. At their suggestion he banished from Lyons the agents of Piero engaged extensively in commercial speculations in that city, while he allowed the other merchants from Florence to proceed without interruption in their mercantile concerns. Piero was at no loss to recognize the contrivance of Ludovico in this injury, and in his turn he endeavoured to subvert the influence of this intriguing foe with the dreadful adversary, whose now impending arrival approached with new terrors to his timid heart. The natural baseness of his disposition suggested to him a ready means of betraying the secret councils of Ludovico to the prince whose ambition he was now using as an instrument of his private views. Concealing the ambassador of the French king behind the arras of his audience-chamber, he led the commissioner from Milan into an exposition of the views of his master in relation to the contemplated invasion of Charles. Taverna fell into the snare. He acknowledged that Ludovico had intended to avail himself of the arrival of the French for the advancement of his own purposes of ambition or revenge, and he ridiculed the idea of Italy being in danger from

any attempt of Charles to establish the power of his crown within the Alps.

By this act of treachery the ruler of Florence expected to destroy the confidence of the French monarch in the ally upon whom he had most relied for success in his perilous adventure. In this, however, the cunning of Piero overreached itself; for the ambassador, who in secret had heard the declaration of the representative of the Milanese court, had learned enough to convince him, that whatever might be the motive of Ludovico, his assistance was at least to be depended upon till the house of Aragon should be shaken from the Neapolitan throne. It might then be the aim of the princes of the North to interfere with the establishment of the Gallic dynasty; but Charles had little fear of the minor powers of Italy when once he should have built up his throne in the midst of them, and could pour from the Alps the irresistible power of his native kingdom upon the divided states that might seek to molest the quiet of his rule in the South.

The king now, therefore, having resolved upon the invasion of Italy, prepared by composing, even at a sacrifice, the difficulties with which his foreign relations had surrounded him, to devote the whole force of his military to this important object; and the Aragonese, perceiving the inevitable war into which they were about to be impelled, determined to have the boast at least, if not the advantage, of commencing hostilities. A Neapolitan squadron, conducted by Frederic, the brother of the king, was fitted out to make a descent on the Ligurian coast; having effected nothing, it was however soon compelled to return, by the activity of Ludovico in preparing a stronger force to oppose it. Florence, yet trembling for her neutrality, in which she had under the direction of her ruler reposed her safety, was now to make a final surrender of this last subterfuge. The fleet of Frederic had been admitted into the port of Leghorn and the Porto Pisano, and

had there received reinforcements in munitions of war. This privilege was now claimed by the opposite side, and denied by the authorities of Florence under the direction of Piero. This headstrong chief about the same time allowed himself to be brought into a personal conference with Ferdinand, the son of Alphonso and leader of his armies. Won by the specious friendship of the young prince, he united a part of the Florentine forces to those of Naples, and thus completed the imprudent alliance which was to bring the city intrusted to his care into open conflict with the power of the crown of France.

All minor preparations being made, on the thirteenth of August 1494 Charles, at the head of his army, began the passage of the Alps by the way of Mon Ginevra, and having been opposed by no obstruction except that which was offered by the nature of the mountain region which he was to traverse, arrived without impediment on the Italian side.

CHAPTER III.

Charles arrives at Pavia, and marches to the Frontiers of Tuscany.—Piero de' Medici visits him at Sarzanella, and surrenders the Fortresses and Ports of the Florentines on the Mediterranean.—Is declared a Traitor, and driven from the City.—Revolt of the Pisans.—Charles enters Florence.—Piero Capponi obtains favourable Conditions for the City.—Submission of the Pope, and Conquest of Naples.—Fra Girolamo Savonarola.—Departure of Charles from Naples.—Battle of the Taro.—Recovery of the Kingdom by the Aragonese.

The armament of Charles which contemplated the conquest of Italy, could have presented an appearance but little formidable had that unhappy country been united to resist his invasion. A body of 12,000 infantry and of 1,600 men-at-arms, attended each by six

well-mounted horsemen, in all about 23,000 men, was less than Florence alone had often assembled for the defence of her own walls or for purposes of foreign aggression; but the discipline of these troops, the character of the wars to which they had been accustomed, and the ardour of invasion, would have rendered them equal to a much larger force of the Italians, even if all her cities had united against them. The bloodless fights in which the little armies of Florence, Venice, and Milan, not to include those of the still smaller states, had been accustomed to decide the petty quarrels of their governments, had quite unfitted them for a contest with the trained and veteran soldiers of a king whose predecessors had for generations been engaged in sanguinary wars, signalized by days like those of Cressy, Poictiers, Agincourt, by the conquests of Henry V., and the prodigious victories of the Maid of Orleans. The very name of such a soldiery appalled the hearts of the Italians, who from the exercise of peaceful professions were now unexpectedly called upon to assume the practice of arms. The historian Guicciardini, now our chief authority, declares the terror which the artillery of the French spread over the country through which they passed. Long before, the use of powder had been introduced into Italy; but the clumsiness of the huge engines fitted only for the attack of fortified places, and even then but little terrible from their unskilful management, gave an imperfect idea to the Italians of the deadly instruments about to be displayed against them by the French. Even Guicciardini himself, to judge from the expressions with which he designates the ordnance of Charles' army, appears to have been impressed with an awe and a horror which it is difficult for us at the present day to comprehend.

For a moment the hope of Italy revived on the intelligence that Charles, attacked at Asti by that fatal disease the small-pox, was hardly expected to survive. One month was sufficient to remove the pleasing delu-

sion; Charles was easily restored to health, and moving his camp from this mountain-region, made his entry into Pavia. In this city the unhappy duke of Milan was held a prisoner by Ludovico, together with his young and beautiful wife, whose charms are said to have had no less a portion in the misfortunes of her husband than the inherited throne upon which he was not destined to sit. Charles was hardly permitted by his wily ally to see the miserable victims of his ambition or his lust. The duchess found her way at last to the presence of the youthful monarch, and, casting herself at his feet, implored that mercy for her father which she did not dare to invoke for herself in the presence of her watchful guardian and master. Moved by the sight of her beauty, which is said to have pierced the heart of Ludovico himself, and to have won him to the softer thoughts of love until her coldness turned his breast to hate, the gallant monarch felt his interest excited for his fair petitioner; and there is no doubt that he meditated the rescue of herself and her husband from their harsh imprisonment, in which he was compelled for the moment to acquiesce. Ambition was, however, the first feeling of his heart; and the voice of sympathy was stifled by the cry of that engrossing and selfish passion. While Charles was secretly resolving their safety, he still left them in the hands of Ludovico, now more than ever afraid of their influence, since it had been able to excite a feeling prejudicial to his interest even in the breast of his dependent ally. The news, therefore, which overtook the French army on their arrival at Piacenza of the death of the unfortunate duke, could excite but little surprise in the bosom of the king; nor was he unprepared for the annunciations of Ludovico's immediate succession to the long-coveted honours of the ducal crown. The pretext by which he at the same time attempted to strengthen his claim could scarcely be agreeable to the young invader, inasmuch as it could be considered only as the intro-

duction of a new competitor for power, and a new claimant to supremacy in Italy. Pretending to acknowledge the ancient and formally abandoned right of the emperors to ratify the choice of magistrates in the Lombard states, Ludovico urged that the ceremony of such investiture not having been performed, deprived the former rulers of Milan of all consideration as sovereigns, and made their government a usurpation against the paramount authority of the German emperors. Maximilian, who then occupied the imperial throne, for the sake of obtaining an influence in Italy, was easily induced to confer upon Ludovico the sovereignty of a state over which he had no claim, and which thus only could be brought to throw itself under the authority of his crown; while the ambitious regent, armed with this ambiguous title, pretended to enter the field against all who should oppose his rights, as the vindicator of the ancient sovereignty in Lombardy, and as the first legitimate claimant of the ducal crown. Ludovico had not expected to deceive a single government into his alliance by this measure; but he knew, that in the German emperor he could compel a powerful auxiliary into the field in his behalf, by this vain acknowledgment of his paramount authority. In the meanwhile the army of the French king, passing from the North, had entered Tuscany and undertaken the reduction of Sarzana.

Florence might have expected this; indeed, the conduct of Charles had already evinced the determination of making his way to the Neapolitan throne, though every step were to be disputed with the numberless petty states and cities which lay upon the line of his march. Yet, prepared as she should have been for this invasion, she could not contemplate its dangers without trembling on its approach; she had taken no measures for resistance or defence; and she knew that it was not, and had not been, in her power to adopt any that should arrest the progress of the invasion. She

looked, therefore, to her principal head, and seemed to expect from him some security in the impending peril. Piero also felt how much he had himself been instrumental in bringing this storm upon Florence, and he fancied that the look which in their terror the citizens now cast upon him, contained the threat of vengeance rather than the acknowledgment of dependence and the entreaty for aid. The example of his father seemed to instruct him in the only course now left for him to pursue. He resolved, therefore, in imitation of Lorenzo's journey to Naples, to throw himself upon the clemency of Charles by visiting in person his camp. It had never occurred, however, to this unskilful politician, that a radical difference in the posture of affairs demanded very different measures. He forgot that even his father's influence, preponderating as it had been in all the courts of Italy, would hardly have secured him any favour in the cabinets of Transalpine princes; that when the king of Naples was to be gained, there had been powerful reasons in aid of the eloquence of Lorenzo; and that Ferdinand had been purchased by an appeal to the interest which urged his withdrawal from the league against Florence. To the Florentines, moreover, in the case of a result to his treaty which they might think inexpedient and unfortunate, he rendered himself still more offensive and open to censure, inasmuch as he had, without consultation with their magistrates, presumed to barter their interests and their possessions as his personal right by inheritance. Without considering these points, which indeed required but little consideration, Piero departed from the city and threw himself upon the mercy of his resistless enemy. His reception was all that his personal vanity could desire in the depression of his state, and all that the courtesy of a chivalric prince could show. But even while he received with courtesy, Charles negotiated with severity. He insisted, as a sole condition of that peace which Florence now implored and

which she had so recently rejected, the surrender of the citadels of Sarzana, of Sarzanello, of Pietrasanta, of Pisa, and of Leghorn; to be faithfully restored upon the occupation of Naples by the invading army. Piero had undertaken to secure the safety of his state, and to bring back peace to his citizens. He knew no other means of accomplishing his purpose than unconditional submission, and, anxious to procure the safety of what he considered his own property in the commonwealth, he forgot that the Florentines themselves might rather possibly abide the issue of a contest even with the king of France, than yield without a blow the best part of their territory, the only ports of their republic, and their sole defence upon the North against future Lombard aggression. Piero now returned to the city, anticipating a reception similar, perhaps, to that which had greeted his father when he returned with the treaty of accord and alliance obtained from the Neapolitan king. Before he reached its gates, however, he was saluted with tidings of the general discontent. Upon passing the walls he still beheld increasing manifestations of dissatisfaction; yet still he did not, for a short time, comprehend the extent to which the minds of his fellow-citizens, about to be no longer his subjects, were exasperated against him. The first intimation of a general rising was given at the palace, into which he was not permitted to enter. On this moment, and on the energy and address with which he should meet this crisis, depended the fate of Piero. No combination had been formed against his authority for the purpose of producing concert in opposition. If, therefore, he had retained his self-possession, and applied that power which was still at his command to the punishment of this single act of insubordination, instead of betraying those signs of trepidation which declare a consciousness of weakness, and encourage revolt; the minds of the people, however inflamed, would have subsided quickly into the sullen acquiescence of habitual obedience.

But even the troops which, under the command of his relative Orsini, had been stationed without the city, and which were afterwards to furnish a charge against him to the people, were rendered useless to his cause by his pusillanimity. After exciting the displeasure of all who yet dared to think, by posting such a guard around the city, which still contended for the appearance of liberty, and had exacted from Lorenzo himself a show of regard for its forms and its names, the feeble Piero did not dare to call this force to his aid at the moment when its appearance in arms for his cause would have repressed the growing rebellion, and fixed more strongly the power of the city's master by the punishment of those who had dared to hold him accountable. When it became evident that Piero was no less destitute of counsel than the people themselves, and that the want of concert upon their part was compensated by a want of all self-possession upon his, the most resolute among the malcontents began to raise the cry of "liberty," which in the early days of the republic had been always sufficient to assemble the people in arms for its support. Less powerful as an appeal to the Florentines in this decline of their glory, it only became terrible to its enemies in proportion as they were wanting to themselves in boldness and energy. That cry, therefore, which, when raised by the devoted Pazzi against Lorenzo had found no echo in the breasts of the Florentines, was answered by shouts and acclamations, and all the tumult of excited passion, when to the hatred of Piero's oppression was united the scorn which his want of conduct and courage could not fail to excite. At each repeated cry, which now rung through the streets as the thronging populace rushed to the *Piazza* of the *Signoria*, the heart of Piero sunk in his bosom, till at last, unable more and more each moment, to confront the peril, he abandoned to the hope of personal safety the thought and care of all that three generations of his fathers had been wil-

ling to hazard, personal safety and property, and public honour and private esteem, and the consciousness of virtue and the prosperity of their country, to secure. Uncertain whether he had been betrayed by the monarch for whom he had called this tempest upon his head, and who, if he had reflected, he must have discovered to have no interest in Florence apart from his own, he did not direct his flight towards the camp at the head of which he might have still returned a conqueror, to punish or pardon. So perfectly had the terror of the moment turned his mind, indeed, from all power of thought, that it did not occur to him, either to claim the protection of Rome and Naples, dependent as they were for aid on the side of Florence upon the predominance of his counsels and his authority in that city. In the panic of dismay, forgetful of all these resources, he turned his horse towards Romagna, and, accompanied by his brothers, determined to seek an asylum with the former allies, or rather dependents, of his house, the Bentivogli, lords of Bologna. His reception at this court was far from gratifying. Bentivogli in the coarsest manner reproached him with his cowardice in abandoning a state and a power such as he had enjoyed by inheritance from his father, without so much as one drop of blood shed for its maintenance. He told him that this easy abandonment of the supreme controul was calculated to weaken the authority usurped by all the petty chiefs who governed the cities of Italy accustomed to be free, and that he felt, therefore, little obligation to defend a person who had done so much injury to the common cause of princes, and who had proved so utterly incompetent to the task of even aiding in his own defence. Piero, mortified and alarmed at this reception, leaving his brothers behind him, abandoned Bologna and pursued his way to Venice, in which city, though less rudely, he was little more graciously received. This change of residence was afterwards the cause of important results to his

fortune, and delayed for a time the return of the Florentines to the yoke of his family. Thus, after seventy years of authority exercised with nothing less than sovereign pomp, the family of the Medici were expelled from Florence, to begin that first series of disasters which led it in the end to the still more perfect establishment of a constituted sovereignty. Such was the year 1494, so pregnant with the actual and future fortunes of Italy. Nor yet had Florence witnessed all that that year was to produce.

In the meanwhile Charles had advanced through Pisa to Signa, a small town but seven miles from the capital of Tuscany. While dwelling, on his way, for a short period at the former place, Charles had been induced, in spite of his recent treaty with Piero, to assume an attitude of open hostility to the people of Florence; who, notwithstanding their disapprobation of its conditions, had suffered them to be fulfilled to the letter by the cession of all the fortresses required by the French. Ludovico had from the beginning cast his eyes and fixed his hopes on the acquisition of Pisa; hopes which the hatred of the Pisans for the government and people of Florence rendered not unreasonable. On the arrival, however, of Charles, the Pisans, desirous of returning to their ancient liberty, tumultuously demanded its restoration; and hailing the French as their deliverers, implored the sanction of their countenance in throwing off the yoke under which they had so long groaned, and which had rendered their once populous city a desert. So warm were their entreaties, and so affecting their appeal to the sympathy of the bold warriors before whom they detailed the long account of their sufferings, that the tears are said to have flowed down the rugged cheeks of the war-beaten soldiers, and to have choked the utterance of the king, prepared as he had been for slaughter, and accustomed to all the desolation of countries ravaged by fire and by the sword. An ambiguous answer returned to their

entreaties was construed by the people of Pisa into a promise of support. They rushed madly through the avenues of the city, tearing down, wherever they could find them, the ensigns of the Florentine Signory, and for a brief period revelled in all the luxury of anticipated liberty. The intelligence of this insurrection aroused the fears, and at the same moment the indignation, of the Florentines; they felt the force of the danger to which they were exposed, and they resolved to avert it, if possible, by the most prudent submission, but at the same time to vindicate at all hazards the sovereignty and independence of their magistracy. On the seventeenth of November Charles made his entry into the city of Florence, attended by a numerous escort of knights all mounted, and, like himself, with lances couched as if for a tournament. The people, the magistracy, and the clergy, joined in the pompous welcome, and nothing offered to the minds of the Florentines the thought of an enemy in Charles, or of a hostile triumph in his occupation of the city. Yet those into whose hands the government had fallen on the flight of Piero, in all the seeming pomp of rejoicing had not been unmindful of the important charge committed to their hands; and while they showed themselves most earnest for the preservation of peace, had prepared for the necessities of war. After the first ceremonies were over, it became necessary to discuss the terms upon which the several parties stood in relation one to the other. Charles insisted, that as he had entered with arms in his hand, he had in fact effected the conquest of the city, and had by the rights of war the sole power of dictating conditions, to which the Florentines were bound to submit. Something of this had been anticipated on the part of the magistracy, and, in expectation of the contest to which it might give rise, they had so disposed the force of the city as to make it most available upon any sudden emergency, while a large troop from the surrounding country was

kept on the alert to rush upon the city on the first signal of her larum bell. At the same time that the citizens discovered the hostile attitude which Charles had resolved to assume in the stipulation of ultimate terms with the city, he himself was led to observe a spirit of resistance which the pusillanimity of their ruler had hardly allowed to anticipate in the citizens. It is more than probable, therefore, that he would have receded greatly from his first exorbitant dmands but for the excited cupidity of his soldiery, which had been permitted to indulge in the hope of a rich booty on the conquest of this opulent city, and could not now, with safety to the success of the great adventure, be repressed.

Four principal citizens had been formed into a commission to treat with him upon this point, and to settle the terms on which Charles should be considered as the ally, the guest, or the protector of the city. Chief of this commission was Piero Capponi, a fit representative of that family which had given to the republic the virtues and the services of Gino and Neri. Day after day as these commissioners rejected the offers made by the pretended conqueror these offers were changed; but every substitute, requiring the surrender of the city's freedom by the acknowledgment of Charles as its conqueror, presented the same objection to the faithful and jealous guardians of the city's charter, and was by them rejected without the acquiescence which might be inferred by the delay required for a moment's consideration. Wearied at last, and fearing that longer treaty might become even more pernicious in its consequences than either coercion or retrocession from his demands; or desirous, it may be, of an opportunity for rifling so wealthy a city; Charles invited the commissioners to attend in his presence, and to hear the reading and declaration of his ultimatum. As the officer proceeded to read, Capponi could with difficulty restrain his anger at the immoderate demands. At each pa-

ragraph his impetuosity displayed itself in bursts of indignant contempt, till at last, snatching the paper from the hands of the reader, he tore it in pieces, and scattering the fragments to the winds, exclaimed to the astonished monarch, "*If these be the terms upon which you offer peace, take to your trumpets king; our bells shall answer them.*" Having uttered these words he rushed from the presence.

Charles would no doubt have been pleased to punish the insolence of this defiance had he felt himself permitted to indulge the feeling which then ruled in his bosom; but he too well knew the importance of proceeding upon his great expedition with an army that should have all the imposing influence of an unconquered name; and he felt that the advantage which the courage and discipline of his soldiers, sufficient in the field to insure him the victory against any number, however superior, of the unpracticed Italian militia, would be lost in the mob-fight of the narrow streets of the city; more especially against a people who for many centuries had been accustomed to fight with unequalled courage and address in this tumultuous manner. He had had, moreover, a foretaste of such a contest but a few days before, when a trifling difference between certain of the soldiers of his camp and a few of the citizens had been decided by arms, and though the terrible Swiss guard had been concerned on the side of the former, the latter were thought to have come off with the advantage. It may also have been known to Charles that great provision had been made for reinforcing the city from without its walls, although he certainly was not aware of the extent of the provision. That, however, which no doubt more than all inclined the king to peace, was the little success of his attempt to restore the outlawed Piero, in whom he had hoped to place a guard upon the conquered city when he should pursue his march towards Naples. In this view he had written to him; but Piero turned

to the senate of Venice for counsel, and received such as it suited the policy of her senators to give. He was advised to doubt the professions of friendship which came from a king who had so lately been his enemy, and whose interests he had always opposed; at the same time he was unofficially assured that at a more propitious moment Venice herself would restore him to his fortunes and his power. The timidity of Piero was persuaded, and thus the communication which Charles had opened with him suddenly ceased. Even to all these motives must yet be added another reason, which we may believe, from the general character of the invading prince, to have exercised its just influence—the admiration excited in the breast of a chivalric leader by a display of daring and resolution equal to his own. Piero Capponi was therefore recalled, and terms more equal were offered to him as commissioner on the part of the citizens.

The basis of the treaty recognized the city as an ally of France, whose king was bound to afford her protection; and all the details of the agreement were in accordance with this principle. Thus the fortresses which had been delivered up to Charles were to remain in his hands for all military purposes during the time of his actual presence in Italy for the conquest of Naples; but the civil and fiscal concerns of all the places so rendered, were to be still under the sole government of Florence and her Signory. Upon her part, the city was to remove its sentence of confiscation and outlawry against the Medici, who, however, were forbidden to return on pain of its renewal; Piero, within less than a hundred miles of the territory of Florence, and his brothers within less than the same distance from the capital. These articles being solemnly sworn to upon either side, the king, after a residence of ten days, from the 17th to the 27th of November, began his march from Florence towards the South,

and was received at Siena with every demonstration of favour.

From Siena, Charles pursued his march towards Rome, receiving on his way the submission of all the cities of Tuscany, secured by his treaty with Florence. His approach to the city of the Church was learned there with a diversity of feelings. The pope, Alexander VI., had rendered himself by his vices obnoxious even to the greater part of his ecclesiastical dependents; and the arrival of Charles was welcomed by these as a means of effecting a reformation by the call of a council for the deposition of Alexander, whose crimes had given ample cause to justify even a measure so violent, and whose opposition to the French had afforded them a fair opportunity of proceeding against him to any lengths. The necessity of a prompt and vigorous action against the Neapolitan princes saved the trembling prelate from this probable danger. Charles satisfied himself with obtaining possession of such fortresses as seemed requisite for the conduct of his military affairs, and promising not to interfere in the concerns of the Church, made his formal entrance into Rome at the moment at which the duke of Calabria was making his hurried escape from an opposite gate.

The affairs of the kingdom now became desperate. Neither Ferdinand nor Alphonso had ever endeavoured to fortify themselves against danger from invasion by securing the affection of their subjects. The reigns of both had been a continuous series of treacheries, oppressive wars, and cruelties. They had kept no faith with their subjects, and the retributive hour demonstrated that their subjects had preserved no fealty to them. While all the rest of Italy, awed by the terror of the foreign soldiery, had assumed a cold neutrality, the Neapolitans themselves ran with ardour to embrace the cause of their invader, rendering his march to their throne a procession rather than a contest.

Alphonso, finding resistance vain, or rather, we should say, deprived of every means of resistance, resolved to abdicate; and declaring that he no longer demanded allegiance from his former subjects, implored their fidelity to his son, whom he now offered them for their sovereign. This measure, which the amiable qualities of the young prince might have made of some avail if taken earlier, was now without effect. Alphonso having retired to a convent in Sicily, died before the expiration of the year; and his unfortunate son, unable to sustain the weight of the public odium excited by two generations of tyranny and oppression, was obliged to fly before the victorious arms of the happier Charles. This monarch, now without a competitor, took possession of the throne of Naples, and received the oath of fidelity from a people remarkable for their love of political change, and for the slight importance which they have always attached to the obligation of the bond they were now in the act of assuming with acclamations of joy.

While the invasion of Charles was thus attaining the end for which it had been devised, it had become the means of effecting many changes in Italy no less important than the subversion of the Aragonese dynasty of Naples, though not contemplated by the invading prince. Giovanni, Cosimo, Piero, and Lorenzo de' Medici, had fixed upon Florence by four generations of inherited power the rule of a family as sovereign, which, in ordinary circumstances, neither the crimes nor the weakness of their successor would have been sufficient to destroy. The coming of Charles had effected, however, by a result unexpected to himself, what, perhaps, if meditated, might not have been so easy of accomplishment, and what Florence herself, if she even desired it, had ceased to expect. He had subverted the Medicean influence in the accidental expulsion of Piero, and restored to the citizens the choice and model of their government. They had still re-

tained the name of a republican people, and many indulged the belief that this might prove a favourable moment for the vindication of that name, and for the restoration of the institutions, which had not only distinguished them from every other people of Italy, but which had characterised them as eminent in prosperity, genius, and virtue.

At the moment, however, that many were anxiously bent upon the restoration of the republic, many also considered the downfall of Piero but as a proper occasion for the exaltation of other families, kept only from the sovereignty before by the successful usurpation of the Medici. These, though fewer in number than the advocates of the republic, were, as might be expected, more dexterous in the conduct of their plans. They first proposed to the people the exercise of their sovereign right in the formation of a Balia to reform the government. Deceived by this acknowledgment of their ultimate supremacy, the multitude proceeded to select a Balia of twenty, who should, by the old method of *imborsation*, re-establish the republican institutions. In the number of these to whom the people had thus too suddenly delegated that power which they had so recently regained, was the exiled Lorenzo. On the flight of his kinsman he had returned to Florence, and assumed, in token at once of his hatred of the family which he had had in common with the tyrant, and of his devotion to the rights of the citizens, the name of *Popolani* in exchange for that of *Medici*. Another individual, chosen from among the most powerful and influential families of the city, was Paolo Antonio Soderini. No sooner did this commission find itself in possession of the uncontrolled direction exercised by a Balia, than its members began to disclose the motives by which they were actuated. Soderini, finding himself there in a minority, and the majority on the point of transferring the liberties of the city to a new master, abandoned his place in the Balia; and passing over to

the side of those who had contended for the restoration of the republic, added greatly to their strength. While the city was in this confusion, the peculiar talents of an individual who had some time before begun to distinguish himself, were brought into exercise, and tended greatly to increase the popular excitement.

Savonarola, the singular hero of the political vicissitudes of this new era in Florentine history, was not himself by birth a Florentine. The son of a Paduan gentleman residing in Ferrara, he was born in that city about the year 1452, and at the age of twenty-two, without the knowledge of his parents, he had assumed the habit of a Dominican in the city of Bologna. The fame of his sanctity and of his learning, or, it is possible, of his remarkable talent, caused him to become known to Lorenzo at the moment when, having firmly and finally established his rule, that fortunate leader was directing his care, after the manner of Augustus, to the illustration of his court and reign. Invited to Florence by this magnificent patron, he soon attained the highest honours which his mode of life and his profession allowed; but no hope of advancement, no flattering demonstration of favour, could win him to attach himself personally to the palace of Lorenzo, or to lend, by his attendance and sanction, a new support to the usurpation which his heart rejected and his reason condemned. In the quality of founder of the convent over which Savonarola presided as Prior, Lorenzo de' Medici was a frequent visitor to its gardens and public halls; but even on such occasions he could not prevail upon the obstinate friar to favour him with an interview. The example of all Italy did not affect the pride or the virtuous contempt of Savonarola. While the high and the low considered it not degrading to beg admittance to the presence of the great dispenser of public and private honours in Florence, this single individual at the sound of his approach retired to his inmost cell, and there indulged the prayers

of the impostor or the enthusiast against the subverter of the common liberty. Even while the popular favour rendered it both dangerous and useless to declaim in public against the authority usurped by Lorenzo, the sturdy democrat could not be led in his private conversations to disguise the hostility which he nourished in hopelessness towards the idol of the populace. The death of Lorenzo and the accession of a so much less respected person as Piero inspired him with new hope; but when the flight of that rejected despot opened once again the lips that had long been fastened in silence, in vindication of the common freedom, the zealous eloquence of Savonarola burst upon the citizens with a fervour and an impetuosity that left them no time for reflection, and hurried them into all the measures which to his excited passions seemed no less feasible than just. In the balancing of parties, while yet it seemed undecided, which scale should preponderate, the weight of such an influence thrown into the popular side determined the question. With the shrewdness belonging to his profession, he could not be deceived by the artifice which had been practiced on the citizens, in affording them the privilege of establishing a Balia, to transfer their liberties again to some aspiring individual. He declared that the people, in conferring such unlimited power, had created twenty tyrants in the first exercise of their recovered liberty; and mingling with the sacred names which his profession made familiar to his tongue, and which his eloquence had made even terrible to his hearers, the no less holy cause in which he had engaged his soul, he succeeded in rendering his political opinions a part of the religion with which he penetrated the hearts and minds of his hearers. Persuaded by his earnestness that nothing less than the eternal Providence had led to this opportunity of restoring the republic, and that the will of heaven required its re-establishment, the populace, under the direction of its spiritual and political guide,

without regret proceeded to the demolition of their former work and annihilated the Balia. Savonarola next ordered the formation of a council to consist of eight hundred and thirty citizens who had passed the age of thirty years, and whose reputations stood unblemished before their fellows. From this council were to be chosen the officers of the city and the republic. Savonarola had found it easier to induce the people to this step, and, indeed, to yield a blind and absolute assent to all his views, from the circumstance that they had already conceived an idea of him as of a prophet sent at once for their instruction and regeneration. "He evinced at the same time," says Sismondi, "an ardent love of mankind, deep respect for the rights of all, great sensibility, and an elevated mind. Though a zealous reformer of the church, and in this respect a precursor of Luther, who was destined to begin his mission twenty years later, he did not quit the pale of orthodoxy; he did not assume the right of examining doctrine; he limited his efforts to the restoration of discipline, the reformation of the morals of the clergy, and the recall of priests, as well as other citizens, to the practice of the gospel precepts: but his zeal was mixed with enthusiasm; he believed himself under the immediate inspiration of Providence; he took his own impulses for prophetic revelations, by which he directed the politics of his disciples, the Piagnoni. He had predicted to the Florentines the coming of the French into Italy; he had represented to them Charles VIII. as an instrument by which the Divinity designed to chastise the crimes of the nation; he had counselled them to remain faithful to their alliance with that king, the instrument of Providence, even though his conduct, especially in reference to the affairs of Pisa, had been highly culpable." A new and magnificent building was erected to contain this council, consisting of more than all the former officers of the republic, since it had been after its first erection increased until it came at

last to consist of 1755 persons. The rapidity with which this edifice was constructed seemed to Savonarola a mark of the continued favour of heaven, by whose dictation the council had been created; and he did not hesitate to declare that the angels of the Most High had taken part in the erection of the proud dome which was to be the seat of the proudest and the noblest work of human genius—the upright representation of an enlightened community under a free constitution.

While Florence was thus engaged in the more important care of restoring her civil and political institutions to the purity which had been long unknown to them, her citizens had hoped that the same fortune might attend the management of their foreign relations. King Charles had succeeded in accomplishing the object of his invasion, and those who had been compelled to aid in its completion, had now a right to demand the restitution of those places which had been put for his greater security in the hands of his officers. Among the rest, the magistrates of Florence, in the name of their citizens, expected to be reinstated in the undisputed possession of Sarzana, Sarzanella, and Pisa. On the other hand Charles had, at least by implication, consented to the revolt of the Pisans, and it would now become a difficult and delicate undertaking to reconcile the jarring claims which the people of the revolted city and the magistracy of Florence might seem to have upon his equity and public faith. Irresolute as to the course which policy might dictate, and certain that on either side he must expose himself to merited blame, the monarch hesitated; but his officers and soldiers, less scrupulous than their sovereign, and feeling their interest in maintaining the intestine dissentions of Italy, were easily gained to sustain the quarrel of the rebellious Pisans. The cause of both parties, argued before the king, resulted in nothing but the assurance that justice should be accorded to each;

and the Florentines were left to recover possession of Pisa by such means as they could themselves supply, while the Pisans, assisted openly by the soldiers of the royal army, by the Sanese, the Genoese, and the Lucchese, and secretly by the advice and encouragement of Ludovico, were permitted to maintain their liberties if by such aid they should find themselves able to do so. This was obviously to be their last struggle, and they resolved to sustain it with fortitude. The Florentines, to recover their rule without resort to a doubtful encounter, were willing to make concessions to their revolted subjects. They offered to extend to Pisa certain commercial privileges, such as the liberty of working in silk and in woolens, privileges withheld from their subject cities; but the hope of reacquiring an absolute independence, or the fear, perhaps, that such extorted privileges were but to remain to them so long as their own arms and those of their allies might impose upon the sovereign city, and the long hatred of the Florentine name, augmented by the cruelty of its government, made vain the efforts of Florence for the peaceful recovery of her valued dependency. Even later, when Charles upon his way through Tuscany again received and heard the commissioners of the two cities, he found it impossible to adjust the difference which his coming had excited; and his departure from Italy, which did not occur till some time afterwards, still left the contest to be decided by arms.

But while the capital of Tuscany was thus engaged for the reintegration of her state and empire, the other cities and governments of Italy were struck with consternation at the irresistible advances of the foreign prince towards universal dominion in the Peninsula. The fortresses abandoned as pledges to his possession in his progress towards the South, and still retained when the conquest of Naples had been effected, appeared to them as so many *points d'appui* in its con-

templated and already commenced subjugation. Of all to whom this new condition of things was most displeasing, Ludovico began to entertain the deepest apprehensions. The claims of Charles, which his reckless ambition had put on foot, and to which he himself had opened the passage into Italy, were not more valid to the throne of Naples than those of the duke of Orleans to the ducal crown of Milan. In addition to the fears which the already whispered pretensions of the Orleannois excited in the bosom of Ludovico, there were other deeply interesting feelings at work in his mind to turn him from the cause of his ally. He now found himself farther than ever from the possession of all that he had hoped to gain by the aid and influence of Charles. Pisa, the first object of his desires, had escaped his snares, and bid fair to prove as hostile to his rule as Florence herself. Bound by no principle to the interests of Charles, the expulsion of that prince from Italy became, in this posture of affairs, an object of the first importance to his plans of future aggrandizement. No scruples were permitted to interfere with this change in his views; and all the energy which had formerly been employed to allure the invading army beyond the limits of its native country, were put in exercise to crush it now, as useless or prejudicial to the schemes of the unprincipled chief by whom it had been called into the field. Venice, in all the progress of Charles through Italy, had preserved a strict neutrality; she had allowed him to fix himself by undisputed conquest, and victory gained after victory, in the heart of the Peninsula; but now, no less terrified than Ludovico, she began to feel that the security of that peace, in which her wealth was continually augmenting to the wonder and admiration of the world, might be too dearly bought. The increase of these natural and well-founded terrors spreading over many other states, at last induced a formal league for the expulsion or the destruction of Charles and his army.

Ludovico wanted but the shadow of an excuse, and the fearless character of Charles soon furnished him with one, for an open desertion.

At Venice, in which city the ambassadors of the frightened states convened, the pope, the duke of Milan, the king and queen of Spain, and the king of the Romans, by their representatives agreed with the Venetians on the necessity of adopting measures for the safety of Italy, over which Charles had travelled with the rapidity and the devastating power of lightning. Many cities not represented in this congress were invited to take part in the measures proposed for the general defence, and Florence of course received the most flattering overtures. Still mindful, however, of the treachery of Ludovico and the cost of Charles' enmity, that city, by her magistrates, refused to concur in the general movement, fearing, it was thought, to strengthen the reluctance of the foreign prince to the restoration of the citadel and fortresses of Pisa, Pietra-Santa, and Sarzanella.

"In the meanwhile," observes Guicciardini, who lived in the midst of these tumultuous scenes, "the credit of the French was by this time very much sunk in the kingdom of Naples; for, by giving themselves up to diversions, and leaving the government to chance, they had neglected to expel the Arragonians from the few places they possessed, which might have easily been compassed had they pursued their good fortune. Many reasons contributed to increase the people's discontent; for although the king had given marks of his generosity on several occasions, by granting in all parts of the kingdom such privileges and exemptions as would have lessened the royal revenue above two hundred thousand crowns a year, yet other matters were not ordered with the prudence that was necessary. Charles was naturally very indolent, and left the management of all weighty affairs to his ministers, who, either through ignorance or avarice, threw

every thing into confusion: the barons were not treated with the respect due to their rank, nor rewarded according to their merit, unless by accident; they were admitted with difficulty to the king's presence; no regard was paid to the different degrees of quality; and no pains taken to confirm the disaffection of those who were already ill-disposed towards the Arragonians. Many difficulties were raised to protract the restitution of the forfeited estates that had been taken from those of the Anjouin faction and other barons expelled by old Ferdinando. No favours were bestowed without bribes, and many persons, without reason, were displaced; posts of profit, and most of the crown lands, were distributed amongst the French, to the great mortification of the Neapolitans. This unexpected treatment had entirely alienated the affections of the people, and converted their former affection into violent hatred; and, on the contrary, their aversion to the Arragonians was turned into esteem. They compassionated Ferdinando, from whose virtue they had reason to have expected great achievements: they called to mind his last speech, delivered with so much mildness and resolution: in fine, they wanted nothing but an opportunity to replace on the throne that family, to whose destruction they had so lately contributed. Even the odious name of Alfonso was now become agreeable.

4 The king, before the forming of the above-mentioned league, was determined to return into France, more out of levity and to please his courtiers, who vehemently wished it, than out of any prudent motive; for in his new kingdom many important affairs were not yet settled, nor could the victory be deemed complete till the whole was subdued. When the articles of this new confederacy came to the king's knowledge, they gave him a great deal of uneasiness. His council was of opinion they should hasten their departure for France, where alone they could make suitable pre-

parations. But Charles met with unforeseen accidents; for his army being dispersed over the kingdom, he found he had not a sufficient force to conduct him to Asti through the allied army, and it was necessary to leave part of his forces behind him to secure his new acquisitions: but the safety of his person being his chiefest care, he provided but indifferently for the preservation of his conquest, and left only one half of the Swiss, part of the infantry, eight hundred French lances, and about five hundred Italians, who had been enlisted by the prefect of Rome, by Prospero and Fabritio Colonna, and Antonello Savelli. On the 20th day of May, the king left Naples, taking with him eight hundred lances, a guard of two hundred gentlemen, Trivulzi with a hundred lances, three thousand Swiss, a thousand French, and a thousand Gascons, giving orders to Camillo Vitelli and his brother to join him in Tuscany with two hundred and fifty men-at-arms, and for the fleet to return to Leghorn. All this while the affairs of the allies in Lombardy advanced very briskly. Ludovico had received from Cæsar, with great solemnity, the investiture of the duchy of Milan, paid homage in public to his ambassadors, and taken the oath of fidelity. The duke, in concert with the Venetians, had made great preparations to obstruct the king's return into France, or at least to secure the duchy of Milan, through which he was to pass; they both made new levies of men-at-arms, to be maintained, part at their separate expense and part in common: and, though with some difficulty, they prevailed on Giovanni Bentivoglio to accept a salary from both, on his obliging the city of Bologna to declare for the league."

It was not difficult to foresee that Charles could not retain for any length of time the conquests which he had acquired with such unexpected ease. The formation of a northern league at the moment of his declining popularity in the South, could scarcely there-

fore be a cause of astonishment even to himself; but the success of such a league, though it might not even be problematical, could not restore to Italy her former condition, by making her independent, as she had been before, of popular revolutions and cabinet intrigues beyond the Alps.*

Florence, as we have already seen, had refused to unite in the effort which the common interests of Italy required for the expulsion of the invading army, that had become in a great measure to resemble a predatory troop of freebooters rather than the disciplined soldiery of a powerful prince. Yet not even this desertion of her former principles and of the common cause could win for Florence the favour of him for whom she had made such a sacrifice. With a disaffected province in his rear, and the army of the league continually increasing on the borders of Lombardy, the only safety of Charles depended upon the party which the hope of his assistance might secure him in Tuscany. The revolted Pisans stood just in this relation to him in this very critical moment; and the ambiguous aid which he offered them, while it did not make Florence his enemy, secured to him a certain retreat

* "The invasion of the French not only spread terror from one extremity of Italy to the other, but changed the whole policy of that country, by rendering it dependent upon that of the Transalpine nations. While Charles VIII. pretended to be the legitimate heir of the kingdom of Naples, the duke of Orleans, who succeeded him under the name of Louis XII., called himself heir to the duchy of Milan. Maximilian, ambitious as he was inconsistent, claimed in the states of Italy prerogatives to which no emperor had pretended since the death of Frederick II. in 1250. The Swiss had learnt, at the same time, that at the foot of their mountains there lay rich and feeble cities which they might pillage, and a delicious climate, which offered all the enjoyments of life; they saw neighbouring monarchs ready to pay them for exercising there their brigandage. Finally, Ferdinand and Isabella, monarchs of Aragon and Castile, announced their intention of defending the bastard branch of Aragon, which reigned at Naples. But, already masters of Sicily, they purposed passing the strait, and were secretly in treaty with Charles VIII. to divide with him the spoils of the relative whom they pretended to defend."—*Sismondi.*

in case of any sinister result on the side of Naples or Milan. Its port at the same time rendered him master of the coast, and opened him, in case of necessity, a communication with his kingdom of France.

Having established his relative Gilbert de Montpensier as viceroy of Naples, and left the Pisans in charge of the chevalier Entragues, Charles now prepared to take up his march for the evacuation of Italy; and pursuing his way to Lombardy, entered the Apennines at Pontremoli in the Lunigiana. Having sacked this place against the public faith on which he had been permitted to enter it, he continued his march towards the rapid stream, or rather torrent, of the Taro, on the opposite side of which the army of the league was drawn up to oppose him. Italy had long been unacquainted with the art of war as practised by the ferocious soldiery with which her children were now to contend. Thirty-five thousand men in arms, however, had been by some means assembled together; and the hope of a plentiful booty, added to the security which they felt in the immense superiority of their numbers, gave to the common troops an eagerness scarcely expected by their leaders. To Charles a speedy passage into his own dominions was of paramount importance. However much, therefore, his adventurous spirit would perhaps have been pleased by the opportunity of engaging with this superior force, whose superiority, consisting in numbers alone, could have had no terrors for him, he found himself compelled to restrain his impetuosity, and to content himself with simply demanding an unobstructed passage out of Italy. The Proveditori,* on the part of the Venetians, desirous of liberating the Italian states upon the easiest terms from his formidable presence, were anxious to accede to his wish, and urged the refraining from every act of hostility. The opposite opinion, however,

* The Proveditori were kept as a species of honourable spies, or as checks upon its generals, by the Venetian senate.

prevailed; the freedom of the passage was denied, and either party prepared to settle the question by the sword and by the fortune of war. On the 6th of July, 1495, this memorable battle was fought by twelve thousand French and Swiss against nearly three times that number of Italians, hirelings or slaves of the petty princes who had usurped the sovereignty of their states. In the time of the republics a few cities of Lombardy had defeated the ambition of the German emperors, when men like Barbarossa and Frederic II. wore the imperial crown; and later still, but yet in the name of liberty and the republic, Florence alone had kept her unbarred gates against the leaguering force of German Henry. On this occasion, after an obstinate contest the army of the league declared itself victorious, and set up the helmet of king Charles as a trophy; while Venice, for the honour of her arms, returned, in public shows and triumphs, thanksgivings for her victory. Yet the grounds upon which Charles asserted his claim to all the honours of success cannot be disputed; while three thousand Italians remained dead upon the field, his force had been diminished by but one third of that number, and, unmolested by the enemy, he had soon afterwards proceeded on his march.*

The glory of the French arms, carried in this conflict to the highest pitch, and justifying in some degree the awe with which they had inspired the Italians, was destined to receive a check almost immediately after. Misguided by their adherents, the French had been induced to make an attempt upon Genoa. A total failure on this occasion, and the capture of the

* "Charles the next morning marched his army before day-break, without sound of trumpet, to conceal, as much as possible, his departure. The allies did not stir that day, nor could they well have pursued them on account of the waters, as more heavy rains had fallen that night, and made the river impassable the best part of the day."—*Guicciardini.*

troop by means of which the reduction of this important city had been contemplated, destroyed the cause of Charles in Italy, and rendered his successful resistance at the Taro in all probability the preservation of his life. In Naples, matters had been conducted even more unfortunately. Ferdinand had made a descent upon the coast, and been received by large bodies of his father's subjects who flocked to his standard. In this attempt for the recovery of his throne the gallant prince was attended by Gonsalvo de Cordova, whose exploits against the Moors in Spain had made him famous before the world, and fitted him in reputation and opinion as an antagonist for the conquering French. After some time the royal city of Naples fell into the hands of the young prince, and restored, though on a feeble and unsettled foundation, the empire of the bastard line of Aragon.

CHAPTER IV.

Piero de' Medici attempts to re-enter the City.—Trial and Execution of his Friends.—Savonarola excommunicated.—Condemned and put to Death.—War with Pisa.—Death of Ludovico Sforza.—Affairs of the Church.—Lucretia Borgia.—Piero Soderini, Gonfalonier.—Death of Alexander VI.—Succeeded by Pius III.—Election of the Cardinal della Rovere to the Papacy.—Surrender of Pisa.—League of Cambray.—Return of the Medici to Florence.

Charles in the meanwhile had reached the city of Asti in Piedmont. Here he was visited by delegates from the Florentine republic, who claimed the restoration of Pisa according to former stipulation, and which the king under various pretences had delayed, until, having passed the army of the league and joined his friends in Asti, he should no longer need the Tuscan fortresses as places of refuge in which to fortify

himself against the enemies that threatened him from the North. Even then, when these reasons no longer operated to make the possession of Pisa necessary to the safety of Charles, he could not bear the thought of restoring a people who, relying on his faith, and partly for his sake, had thrown off the yoke of a galling slavery into the hands of their irritated oppressors. He still found, therefore, pretexts for delay, and the Florentines still beheld themselves compelled to carry on a war of skirmishes for the reduction of the outposts which fortified the city of their rebels, when suddenly the order arrived for the transfer of the Pisan citadel to the hands of the Florentine magistracy. Pisa had not excited the anger of the Florentines by this rebellion, to return at the bidding of Charles into the power of her hated enemy. She knew, moreover, that his only motive for abandoning her was the fear that she might fall into the hands of the Venetian senate or of some other party to the league; and that so long as she preserved her independence, if she might not look to him for support, she had no reason to dread him as an enemy. The very terms of his treaty with Florence had shown the interest which he still took in her affairs, by an express stipulation introduced for the protection of her citizens.* The commander of the

* The articles of this treaty were, "that, without any delay, all the towns and forts of the Florentines should be restored; they obliging themselves, at the end of two years, on a valuable consideration, to deliver up, if the king should require it, Pietra Santa and Sarzana to the Genoese, provided the city of Genoa should, at that time, be under his majesty's command: that the ambassadors should pay down the thirty thousand ducats agreed upon in the capitulation at Florence: that at the time they were given up they should lend the king seven thousand ducats; for the payment of which the generals of the kingdom of France should be bound: that, provided they were not engaged in a war in Tuscany, they should send two hundred and fifty men-at-arms into the kingdom of Naples: that the Pisans should have a general indemnity, and the Florentines should begin immediately to restore their effects, and give some encouragement for their improvement in arts and sciences: that for a security of the performance of these articles, they should send six hostages, of the principal citizens of Florence at the king's choice, who should remain for a certain time at his court."—*Guicciardini.*

French soldiery left for their protection, or for some other secret cause which had actuated the king in all his measures concerning the restoration of the Florentine fortresses, encouraged them in this belief, by refusing to surrender the citadel over which he had been placed even to the order of Charles himself.

The year 1496 brought to Italy a perfect freedom from all foreign arms. Charles had crossed the mountains, and left the Italians to settle among themselves the differences which his coming had created.* Florence, indeed, had the condition of the times and the character of her people permitted her to turn her advantages to account, might seem to have gained by his invasion. But the opportunity of erecting a republic in Italy, to moderate between the jarring interests of the various parts and of the different governments, had been swallowed up in the important political revolutions which had annihilated the whole system of Italian politics, and made the states of Italy dependent on the vicissitudes of nations and governments with which she had no reciprocal influence. The only advantage, therefore, which the coming of the French had appeared to offer to Florence, had been but a deceitful hope, to be weighed against the actual loss of territory and the exciting of a war of petty skirmishes for the recovery of her most valuable dependencies and important frontiers. Such was the commencement of her contest for the reduction of Pisa, till the Venetians, coming to the aid of that city, compelled her, with some danger to herself, to assume the defen-

* "About the end of October 1495, Charles returned over the mountains, more like a vanquished than a victorious prince. He left in Asti, which he gave out he had bought of the duke of Orleans, five hundred French lances under Gianjacopo Trivulzi, but the duke was not able with all his authority to keep them from following the king a few days after his departure. In this manner Charles quitted Italy, without making any other provision for the kingdom of Naples, than the ships that were arming at Genoa and Provence, and the money and aid promised by the Florentines."—*Guicciardini.*

sive. With Venice were joined on the side of the revolted city all the princes of the league, besides the powerful aid and influential name of the German Maximilian. Still the historian scarcely finds the record of a single encounter of arms that deserves to be copied, either for the importance of its results or the interest of its attendant circumstances, unless we except the attempt of the Florentines to recover possession of Sojana—an attempt that cost them the life of their most illustrious citizen, Piero Capponi. Acting as Florentine commissary, he was giving directions for the opening of a battery upon this insignificant place, when he was struck by a random shot and instantly killed. "Too ignoble a death for so brave a commander; who, if destined to meet his fate in the field, deserved to fall in some more considerable action; for the taking of this mean place was of little importance." This, indeed, is a brief eulogium for a man like Piero Capponi. Three families alone had for successive generations divided the admiration and the sympathy of Florence,—the Albizzi, the Medici, and the Capponi. Of these, the first had been remarkable for their aristocratic pride, for the general corruption of the democratic institutions over which they had unfortunately and unfitly been called to preside; but they deserve yet more, a notoriety greater than that which they have acquired, for the opportunities afforded by their ill-advised hostility for the exercise of the specious tyranny of the Medici, still greater enemies to liberty; the Medici, availing themselves of these opportunities, attained that evil eminence which has made them too long the admiration of the inconsiderate and the merely learned; but the Capponi stand through three generations as the unalterable supporters of their country's rights, the advocates of her dearest privileges, and the disinterested champions of her liberties. The names of Giovanni, Cosimo, and Lorenzo de' Medici, awake nothing of the generous feeling that the virtues of Gino, Neri, and

Piero Capponi, excite in the bosoms of every lover of his country and his kind.

During all the period that had elapsed from the forming of the league, the Florentines had stood in opposition to those who were parties to it, and without the favour of a single prince in Italy. They had also been looked upon as enemies of the emperor, who had availed himself of the new state of the Peninsular affairs to introduce the German influence into its interests. Finding the authority of his name insufficient to effect the peace of Italy by attaching Florence to the league, he resolved to try the experiment of a personal address, and scantily attended, in such a manner as to excite but little of fear or respect, he passed through the Lombard cities to the seat of war in Tuscany. Here, after having vainly endeavoured to possess himself of Leghorn, he learned the little value of the imperial title unsustained by arms, and found himself compelled to abandon an enterprize which he had hoped by the influence of his crown and sceptre to accomplish almost without resistance.

In the meanwhile the citizens of Florence had slight cause for self-gratulation. The vicissitudes of the past seasons had not allowed the leisure required for the ordinary cares of the labourer and the husbandman. The supplies had, therefore, in a great measure failed, and the evils of famine threatened to be added to those which still arose from an unsettled policy within, and an expensive and unprofitable war without. Crowds of starving beggars from the country now thronged to the capital, and claimed a portion of the charity that the wealthy extended to the famished inhabitants; and that still fell widely short of the demand. The streets were filled with the dying and the dead; and even the affluent began to apprehend the possibility of perishing for want of bread, in the midst of their valueless, uncounted stores.

The hopes of Florence were at this moment sus-

tained by the enthusiasm of Savonarola. He exhorted the people to bear the inflictions of Providence with fortitude, and assured them that that Providence would not long withhold its bounty. In the midst of these alternate fears and hopes, while a procession of the populace under the direction of this enthusiast was marching to offer up its vows of pious resignation and humble intreaty, a courier arrived with the intelligence of the disembarkation of the French, who had brought with them the supplies for want of which the city had been upon the point of perishing. The pious multitude, first depositaries of the information of this little less than miraculous arrival, communicated it to the city at large; and Savonarola, perhaps himself deceived, now began to think himself divinely commissioned to watch over and instruct the citizens of the regenerate republic.

While every thing appeared, however, to augur so well for the prosperity of the popular interests, the deeply rooted mischief which had undermined the character of the people themselves, and which had owed its origin to the Albizzi and the Medici, was now again at work to counteract and render vain the temporary impulse given, by the expulsion of Piero, to the ancient principles and party of the democracy. From the moment of their expulsion the Medici had not ceased to look forward to their restoration as an inevitable necessity rather than as a possible contingency. Their first attempt had nevertheless been a total failure, and without in the least abandoning their expectations or their designs, they found themselves compelled to await the offer of some opportunity on which they calculated with perfect security as a consequence of the division of parties and the diversity of counsels within the walls of the city. A variety of circumstances, in the succeeding year 1496, appeared to favour these expectations of the exiled family. "At the moment when Florence expelled the Medici, that republic was

bandied between three different parties. "The first was that of the enthusiasts, directed by Girolamo Savonarola; who promised the miraculous protection of the Divinity for the reform of the church and the establishment of liberty. These demanded a democratic constitution,—they were called the *Piagnoni*. The second consisted of men who had shared power with the Medici, but who had separated from them; who wished to possess alone the powers and profits of government, and who endeavoured to amuse the people by dissipations and pleasures, in order to establish at their ease an aristocracy,—these were called the *Arabbiati*. The third party was composed of men who remained faithful to the Medici, but not daring to declare themselves, lived in retirement,—they were called *Bigi*."

At this moment the party of the Piagnoni so greatly predominated as to be able to advance the faction of the Medici, which, waiting its opportunity, and attaching itself in the meanwhile as the occasion might direct, had lent itself to the views of Savonarola and his partizans or disciples. Its forbearance was early rewarded; very many of its members were admitted to a participation in the highest offices; and Bernardo del Neri, one of the most devoted friends of the exiled family, was chosen Gonfalonier. The prudence of his followers was not imitated by Piero. He longed for a return to power, and believing that the elevation of Neri indicated a change of policy in the city, favourable to his cause, encouraged by the Sanese and the duke of Milan, he appeared with a little army of 3000 foot and 800 horse at daybreak before the gates of the city. Whatever hopes he might himself have entertained, it cannot be supposed that Ludovico and the people of Siena had expected with this little troop to effect the forcible reduction of Florence. Neither is it probable that they had suffered themselves to be deceived by Piero, as that individual had allowed himself to be deceived by his wishes and his hopes in re-

gard to the reviving popularity of the Medici among the citizens; but they were not sorry to encourage the expectation of a general rising in favour of Piero, as a means of harassing the city and dividing its councils upon this important question of its domestic interests. When Piero, therefore, persuaded that his appearance before the walls with a show of support would excite an insurrection against the newly-established order, they did not refuse such aid as might be sufficient for the accomplishment of his purpose in case that any accident should occur to render it practicable, or for the defence of his person in case, as they no doubt expected, that he should find the people opposed to his return.

In the meanwhile, in spite of the precautions of Piero, the information of his approach had been carried to the city too early for his partizans to take such measures as would have been requisite even had the people been more inclined to receive him. Yet a momentary terror appears to have seized upon some of the officers belonging to the new government. A certain Benivieni, full of consternation, rushed into the presence of Savonarola exclaiming that the enemy was approaching unresisted, and that he was about to possess himself of the city. The preacher, looking at him with a smile of encouragement and of reproof at the same time, replied in the familiar language of his profession, and which might appear as a wilful imposition if we had not in our own history an evidence of the power of religious zeal and obstinate habit in religious differences, to mislead the zealot into all the extravagancies of madness. It is impossible to believe for an instant that the language of the Scotch covenanters, in the days of their struggle and their partial and temporary success, was intended to impose by deceiving, or that it did so impose upon any but themselves. In the same spirit Savonarola, no doubt, assumed the prophet, not convinced himself whether his

speech were the consequence of a firm and pious faith, relying on the divine justice for the protection and vindication of the just, or whether it were not the actual prompting of the immediate inspiration of heaven His answer was, at all events, ready, and to one to whom it was not ridiculous, it may have proved sublime "Oh thou of little faith," was all his reply, and Benivieni, sufficiently re assured by this confident tone of the monk, returned to impart new hope to his friends Savonarola in this instance acted the prophet at very little risk of failing in his prophecy He had, we may easily suppose, from his influence in the government and with the populace, himself received the earliest intelligence of the approach of Piero, and participated in the precautionary measures taken for the preservation of the republic

Deceived in his expectation of the popular favour, Piero had now to turn his care to the means of escape which were still reserved to him As he had ever been the first to avoid the danger of any encounter which might by possibility become of doubtful consequence to his person, he now perceived no other security than that which presented itself in flight. The dread of his retreat being obstructed or cut off, rendered the contingency of the city's favour, on which he had insisted so strongly before, an impossibility He had, therefore, no longer a thought beyond his personal safety, and the territory of the commonwealth was quickly relieved from the presence of this enemy No sooner, however, did the citizens discover themselves to have escaped this peril, than they put themselves upon the inquiry which it naturally suggested, as to the encouragement which the Medici had received from their party dwelling within the walls of the city.

We have seen a conspiracy of the Florentines, in which a numerous and miscellaneous class united for the restoration of the republican institutions, corrupted or violated by successive generations of the Medici—

we have seen the failure of this conspiracy, and the death of the greater number of all concerned in its success; but we have not discovered a single individual for a moment contemplating the betrayal of his companions while the end was yet to be decided, or willing, when it was no longer in doubt, to purchase his own safety at the expense of one of his comrades. Is there any one who can hesitate to ascribe this absence of all selfish fear, this rare fidelity, to the powerful influence of the sacred cause in which they had engaged their fortunes and their lives? It was not now possible that any thing, except such selfish fear, should assure the parties to this conspiracy against a nation's liberty, of the fidelity one to the other. Yet this was for a brief moment sufficient. While many were desirous, perhaps, of securing their own immunity by the treacherous sacrifice of their accomplices, all were afraid of acknowleding themselves partners in a conspiracy which must have closed against them every bosom's sympathy, and made them scarcely entitled to the observance of the public faith engaged to them for their double treachery. One individual at last was found to brave the common scorn in the hope of preserving his life. The information of this individual implicated with Bernardo del Neri a great many others of the greatest consideration in Florence, who were arrested and put at once upon trial for their offence. An extraordinary council of 160 of the principal citizens having been instituted for the examination of this cause, with little difference of opinion after a patient hearing condemned the accused, and passed upon the four most criminal, sentence of death. From this sentence appeal was made to the great council of state, in which the prisoners were known to have a great number of friends, sufficient, perhaps, to obtain their acquittal; besides that, the first constituting of that body had given admission to very many now suspected friends of the Medici. The council, therefore, by which the conspi-

rators had been tried, apprehensive of the repeal of their sentence, and solicitous for the public safety that its execution should not be avoided, demanded the formation of another, to decide whether the right of appeal might not in this case be denied. All Florence took part in this dispute; and while it seemed yet questionable whether the friends of the republic would be able to obtain their end in demanding the formation of this new council, the members of that by which the criminals had been condemned, together with the new Gonfalonier, while acknowledging a partial illegality in their proceedings, resolved to execute their sentence without abiding the result of their application. At the hour of midnight the executioner entered the cells of the prisoners, and inflicted the richly merited punishment on the persons of the convicted traitors. Bernardo del Neri had passed his 78th year, but yet retained the vigour of a fresher manhood, with a courage that fitted him for a nobler enterprise than that which now demanded the forfeit of his life.

The failure of the efforts which had been made in behalf of these unhappy men exasperated their friends and concentrated their party. All the force of their collected hatred was first turned against Savonarola, not more for the resolution that they denominated obstinacy with which he had resisted all entreaty for the accused, than for the influence which he exercised upon the minds of the citizens, and the importance of that influence to keep together the discordant materials which constituted the popular party. The proudest individuals of the city, who, under the sovereignty of the Medici, had long considered themselves as in all respects a nobility, could not be expected to forget that they had stood on bended knees before the unyielding monk, and that his virtue or his pride had made them bend in vain. Unfortunately the character of the prelate who then filled the chair which represented him to the Christian world as the successor of St. Peter,

was such as to make him obnoxious to the indiscriminate censure of the unsparing moralist. The consequence was necessarily a deadly hatred on the part of Alexander for the person of Savonarola. The political enemies of the reformer were not slow to discover, in this circumstance, a powerful engine to be used to the destruction of the unguarded enthusiast. This was to be done most obviously by connecting the interests of Florence with those of the pope; and, on the other hand, by fomenting the quarrel between the head of the church and his refractory subaltern. Florence had long resisted all application and entreaty to enter the league of the Italian states against the pretensions of the king of France. At the same time she was most solicitous for the reduction of Pisa, whose successful rebellion had been no less hurtful to her interests than galling to her pride. The machinations of the Bigi most probably brought about at last a communication with the pope, the object of which was confessedly to include the Florentines in the league of the Italian people, and to secure to them, on the other hand, by the influence of the pope, the restoration and submission of the revolted city. This end it was afterwards found impossible to accomplish; but the hopes of the populace, excited in regard to the re-acquisition of Pisa, were certain instruments in the hands of Savonarola's enemies. It only then remained to make him an object of papal displeasure, and, as such, to render him in the eyes of the citizens an obstacle to the accomplishment of their desires for the recovery of Pisa and the pacification of the state. "Multitudes of complaints against him had been carried to Rome, where he was accused of preaching, in a scandalous manner, against the bad discipline and vices of the clergy and court of Rome. He was further charged with unsound doctrine, and with fomenting divisions. For these misdemeanours he had been several times summoned to Rome by the pope, but had continued refractory to his

orders, alledging divers excuses for his disobedience; for which he was publicly excommunicated. Under so severe a censure, he refrained for some months from preaching; and probably would have been absolved, had he continued in the same submission: for the pope himself despised him, and exercised his spiritual arms more at the solicitations of some friars, who hated Savonarola, than from his own inclination. But Savonarola finding that by his silence his interest declined, and the ends for which he had preached could not be answered; despising the pontifical orders, returned again to his office; asserting that the censures pronounced against him were null, as contrary to the divine will and public welfare; and at the same time inveighing bitterly against the pope, and the court of Rome. This occasioned frequent tumults: for his enemies, who got ground every day, stirred up the populace, who, above all things, abhorred disobedience to the pope; and had him reprimanded by some in the government for his audaciousness, which tended to alienate the pope's affections from the Florentines, at a juncture when he was treating with the allies for the restitution of Pisa. On the other hand, his followers alleged in his defence, that divine service was privileged from disturbances; that it was dangerous to admit of an example, which would be a precedent for popes to intrude in the affairs of their government. These contentions lasted several days, till Alexander in great wrath thundering out new briefs, and threatening to interdict the city, the magistrates ordered him to desist from preaching. Savonarola obeyed; but the Dominican friars of his convent went from church to church, preaching the same doctrines; which were refuted by the religious of other orders. These disputes were carried on with great heat, and excited such animosities both in church and state, that at last a Dominican and a Franciscan agreed to try by fire the merits of their cause, in the presence of the whole city;

which would convince the world whether Savonarola was a true prophet or an impostor. On the day appointed, the two friars, accompanied by all those of their convents, appeared in the great square before the palace; where were assembled not only the inhabitants of Florence, but also multitudes that came out of the country. Every thing was ready, when the Franciscans were informed, that Savonarola had ordered his friar to enter the fire with the sacrament in his hand; at which they took exception: alledging, that if the host was burnt, it would endanger the authority of the Christian faith, by affecting the minds of the weak and ignorant people. But Savonarola, who was present, insisting that the experiment should be performed in that manner, the trial was set aside. Savonarola's credit suffered greatly on this occasion; so much, that the next day, on a casual tumult, the people took up arms; and being countenanced by the supreme magistracy, they forced themselves into the monastery of St. Marco, seized on Savonarola, and two other friars, and carried them to the public prison. During this confusion, the relations of those citizens, who the year before had been beheaded, assassinated Francesco Valori, a nobleman of great authority, for being chief patron of Savonarola, and the principal cause that the appeal of their relations to the people on that occasion had not been admitted.

"Savonarola was afterwards put to the question, but in a gentle manner; and his examination and confession were by the magistracy formed into a process, and ordered to be published. In this paper he was cleared of several calumnies that had been laid to his charge; such as leading a dissolute life, being avaricious, and having kept secret correspondence with foreign princes. He confessed that those events he had foretold were not by divine revelation, but founded on the doctrine of the Holy Scripture, which he had profoundly studied: that what he had preached, had not

proceeded from any malignity, nor from any ambitious views of ecclesiastical preferments, but from zeal, and in hopes, that through his means, a general council might be assembled, in which the corrupt manners of the clergy might be reformed, and the doctrine of the church restored, so as to resemble, as near as possible, the primitive times. After this the general of the Dominicans, and bishop Romolino, afterwards cardinal Surrente, who had been sent from Rome on purpose to assist at this trial, degraded Savonarola, and the two friars of his order, with the ceremonies used by the Roman church on such occasions, and delivered them over to the secular power. They were first hanged, and then their bodies were burnt, in the presence of as great a multitude, as had assembled before in the same place, in expectation of assisting at the miraculous experiment of fire."* The faults of Savonarola, magnified by his enemies, consist at last, with whatever terms of disapprobation they may express them, in the ultra-democracy with which he endeavoured to re-establish the early institutions of his adopted country, and refused to bow the knee, or otherwise in word or sigh, consent to bend before the pride of an effete aristocracy. His errors, acknowledged by his friends, consist in the enthusiasm which, proposing a noble and important object, disdained to stoop to the means of accomplishing it; and in the extravagant faith with which he seemed to expect the manifest interposition of Providence, as a consequence of the purity and holiness of his motives and of the end proposed to his labours. His virtues are to be gathered from the history of his life and death.

That day, of which the giddy Florentines could not foresee the fatal consequences, and which consigned the zealous advocate of their immunities into the hands of his enemies, who were no less enemies to them, was signalized by another event, in its singular

* Guicciardini.

coincidence calculated to give new importance to his name; to make it even after his death a rallying point for his friends, and a scorn and reproach among his enemies. On the very day of Savonarola's arrest the king of France was taken by death from the theatre of his triumphs, and the fields which he was even at that moment designing as the scene of new enterprises and anticipated glories. The Dominicans declared that the prophecy of Savonarola, denouncing the vengeance of heaven upon that monarch's breach of faith, was verified in his death; while the enemies of that order cited it as a triumphant refutation of his claim to the title of a prophet, inasmuch as he had foretold that this conqueror should return to desolate with blood the hills and plains of Italy. Another prophecy of this enthusiast, founded much more probably upon observation and hope than on divine inspiration, was early to be verified in the reformation soon about to burst forth, the founder of all the protestant churches which now enjoy the blessings of religious liberty; and Savonarola, in proportion as we deny him the glory of the prophet, is entitled to the less ambiguous praise of inferring the necessity of that great politico-ecclesiastical revolution from the abuses and crimes of the Romish hierarchy.* After the death of Savonarola, his party was for a moment reduced to silence; but soon discovering themselves to be yet by far the majority of the citizens, they resumed all the power which they had exercised under their former leader.

In the meantime while new revolutions were occurring in the South, the death of Charles was productive

* The following were the prophecies or denunciations of Savonarola, insisted upon with the greatest urgency in the vehemence of his enthusiasm:

"Ecclesia Dei indiget reformatione, et renovatione.
Ecclesia Dei flagellabitur, et post flagella reformabitur.
Infideles ad Christum, et fidem ejus convertentur.
Florentia flagellabitur, et post flagella renovabitur,
Et prosperabit."—

of less important consequences to Italy than had been anticipated. All the claims which, as king of France, he might advance to the kingdom of Naples, were transmitted to his kinsman and successor, the no less ambitious duke of Orleans. To these claims of the king of France, the duke of Orleans thus united in one person the Orleannois pretensions to the duchy of Milan, now boldly asserted in his despatches and emblazoned on his arms. Yet with this pressing danger Italy would not unite in defence of her states. The Lombard tyrant and the aristocracy of Venice still, in the crooked policy of their dishonest designs, considered it expedient to keep up the flame of discord between the Pisans and the Florentines; while these were urged at once by pride and interest to insist on the reduction of the revolted city as a preliminary to any other treaty, and as a *sine qua non* in every negotiation for her participation in the league. On the other hand, the rebels had held out so long; they had been, too, in all their recent encounters so universally successful, as to render the expectation of achieving their absolute independence, out of the general confusion, a not presumptuous hope. But their victories were speedily checked, and their advantages greatly diminished when the Florentines, having taken into their service Paolo Vitelli, entrusted to him the command of their armies. So great, indeed, were the successes of this skilful leader, that the Venetians, no less interested than the Pisans themselves in the protection of Pisa, began to tremble for the safety of that city. To counterbalance the gain which Florence had acquired in obtaining such a leader for her forces, the senate of Venice engaged the personal aid of the duke of Urbino, to whom were given as coadjutors, by advice of Piero de' Medici, Bartolommeo Alviano and Carlo Orsini. Having entered the Florentine dominion on the side of Sogliano, and possessed themselves by force or stratagem of some of the most important posts suffi-

ciently near to the city to excite its fears for the safety of its walls, these leaders compelled the magistrates of Florence to recall their general from the Pisan country as a protection for their own endangered homes.* The return of Vitelli now made the retreat of the Venetians indispensable. But Florence, who had supposed that the duke of Urbino might now be easily made captive, as he was known to be confined by a severe illness in Bibiena, was not satisfied with his retreat from her territory, and considering that his capture could not have been matter of doubt, had her general been true to his trust, she began to doubt that fidelity of which she had received such striking proofs, and to look with suspicion upon the prudent management of Vitelli, of which she had already reaped such unequivocal benefit. On the other hand, the senate of Venice with equal injustice began to suspect the good faith of their leader, the duke of Urbino, and both parties seemed indeed to desire a cessation of hostilities.

In such a condition of affairs it was not difficult to settle the terms of an accord between these jealous enemies. Referring the adjustment of their differences to the duke of Ferrara, they agreed to abide by the conditions which he as umpire should impose; and through his intervention a treaty of peace was established upon nearly equal terms. Venice and Florence were both dissatisfied, yet both accepted the treaty; but the deserted Pisans alone had reason to call them-

* A number of the friends of the Medici had engaged to deliver the important fortress of Bibiena into the hands of the Venetians. "Alviano, who was entrusted with the execution of the plot, despatched some horsemen, accoutred like travellers, who riding all night, arrived by break of day at Bibiena, and seized on a gate of the town without opposition, for the commissary had placed no guard, nor so much as given orders, as in suspicious times he ought, not to open the gates so early as usual. This first party was soon followed by successive detachments of horse, who gave out on the road, that they belonged to Vitelli. Their friends in the town had now no more to do but to declare themselves openly with all security, and thus was the place taken without a blow."—*Guicciardini.*

selves betrayed. Not willing, however, to resign the care of their liberties, defended so bravely against a sanguinary enemy, they still prepared with their own simple resources for the continuance of the contest. Vitelli, on the other hand, now left to proceed without fear of danger or impediment from foreign forces in aid of the city, reduced the neighbouring country with ease, and in a very short period was enabled to begin the formal siege of the rebels in the last hold of their strength. On the 10th of August of the year 1499 he commenced the attack upon the fortress of Stampace, one of the last bulwarks of the unfortunate place. Having carried, perhaps beyond his expectation, this fortress, and occasioned a breach through which it was supposed he might have entered with all his troops, Vitelli did not consider himself prepared for such a step. He caused, therefore, his soldiers, who had already begun to indulge in the license of conquest, and whose ardour he did not partake, to desist in the midst of his success; and it was afterwards discovered that, in the moment in which he was recalling his forces from the pursuit of their victory, and drawing them from the attack of the city, Gambacorti and others of its principal defenders, believing every thing lost, had already commenced their flight upon the other side, and taken the road to Lucca as an asylum from the persecuting fury of the soldiery to which they thus abandoned their unhappy country. The moment of consternation past however away. Perceiving that the Florentines were not aware of the extent of their gain and their power, and that a moment was yet left for hope, and resuming all the ardour of their former resolution, men, women, and children, thronged to the defence. The breach was repaired, and the walls thus manned were held against the slackened efforts of the Florentines, till succour arriving from Lucca placed the city in its former condition, and compelled the besiegers to retire from the fortress which

they had taken with such gallantry, but which it was impossible for them to retain. Thus unexpectedly saved, the city now began to find another powerful ally, which, during the summer months inoperative, commenced with great violence its ravages against the leaguering squadron with the decline of that season. The malaria of the country surrounding the walls of the city, and on which Vitelli was encamped, was already thinning his numbers, and threatened a terrible destruction to his army. That which for many ages had been the scourge of the city, became now its guardian and most efficient protection; and, indeed, in the ages of the Lower Empire, when the art of attacking fortified places was still in a kind of infancy, and rude, requiring the long dwelling of the besieging army before the walls of the beleaguered place, the peculiar dispensation of nature, which surrounded almost all the cities of the seaboard in Italy with pestilential vapour, requiring for a season its abandonment even by those whom long habit had rendered less subject to its influence, and making it to strangers little less than inevitable death, may have seemed a special interposition of Providence for the protection of the citizens against the assaults of foreign rapacity.

Under this influence the forces of the Florentines now became useless for attack; and might even fall, when sickness should much farther have diminished their numbers and unmanned the strong, a prey to the fury of the exasperated rebels. To save them from this possible danger, Vitelli was obliged to raise the siege and retire towards Cascina; to which place, however, the badness of the roads forbad the transportation of the artillery. It was therefore embarked on board such vessels as the Arno in that part might be able to float, and ordered to Leghorn. As if, nevertheless, to counteract all the plans of Vitelli, and to make his own scrupulous caution in the attack upon Stampace the beginning of a series of disasters to end

in his disgrace and death, the transports never reached the sea; but being too heavily laden or not fitted for the purpose, they suffered shipwreck at the mouth of the Arno, and consequently, yet, within the grasp of the Pisans. Every effort was made by these to obtain possession of so valuable a booty, and succeeding at last in recovering them, they thus were enabled to add to the strength of their fortifications and render them almost impregnable.

Florence was equally exasperated and shocked at this unfortunate and unexpected result of a campaign, undertaken, as it was thought, under the special auspices of heaven; and while she would not acknowledge the inability of her military, and its incapacity even for such a labour as the suppression of a revolt in one of her dependencies, she was perforce compelled to seek some pretext for her defeat which should save the dignity of her name and the reputation of her armies, to secure the allegiance of other subject cities which might be tempted to throw off the yoke of her command. No subterfuge presented itself; no alternative between the shame of a public admission of her reverses with the failure of her arms and the sacrifice of the general who had been unfortunate in conducting them. She did not hesitate in her choice; commissioners were despatched from Florence, who, arriving unexpectedly at the camp of Vitelli in Cascina, were ordered to arrest him and conduct him a prisoner to the city. Under the different and discordant charges of having betrayed his trust for a bribe to the Pisans, or of being in secret treaty with the duke of Milan, or of seconding the views of the duke of Urbino and the Medici, the unhappy commander was put to the torture; but not all the inflictions of the rack could wring from him a confession injurious to his honour. The voice of the people still, however, considered him guilty, and the public vanity required his death. He was therefore the next day beheaded, to gratify the call of

that imperious passion. No sooner was the sentence executed, than public opinion, which had under the excitement of the times condemned him to suffer, now did justice to his memory and vindicated his innocence and his fame. It had been intended to include Vitellozzo, the brother of Vitelli, in the accusation, if not in the punishment, of that leader, and orders were issued for his appearance before the magistracy. These orders found him confined by illness to his bed, from which he answered that he was in readiness to obey the commands of the republic. Rising at the same time as if to clothe himself for this purpose, he delayed until those of his friends, who, foreseeing his danger, had time to assemble around him; when, springing on a charger which was presented him, and brandishing a weapon with which he was at the same moment supplied, he succeeded in cutting his way through the wonder-stricken crowd which had been ordered and armed to arrest him. In this manner he arrived at Pisa, in which city he was received with acclamations of triumph.

In the meanwhile that these comparatively unimportant affairs were keeping employed the minds of the Venetians, the duke of Milan, the Pisans, and the Florentines, a new and terrible series of disasters was preparing for the unhappy country, of which they may be considered to have occupied the most important divisions. The origin of these disasters, after the first descent of the French upon Italy, was the renewal of the claims of Lewis of France to the ducal crown of Milan in right of his paternal grandmother, and to the throne of Naples as successor of Charles, who, to the disputed right of succession, had superadded the less disputable right of conquest. In the former invasion of Charles no opportunity had really presented itself to the most ambitious prince of Italy to signalize his name by any act of atrocity calculated to justify his private character for vice and crime. This prince was

Alexander VI., than whom, in the long line of papal tyrants, no individual had been found to possess a more unhallowed ambition, while none had ventured in the pursuit of its object to cast aside all aid of opinion, all power derived from the sanctity of the papal name and office; and while claiming the obedience of his particular subjects, and the respect of foreign people and princes as the head of their ecclesiastical establishments and the interpreter of their religion, to alienate their affection by an open disregard of all the laws to which they bent, and to excite in them a sentiment of hatred too deep to be contemptuous for the frequency and enormity of his private indulgences. This prelate had been the father of two sons; but one had fallen, and it was scarcely deemed of the slightest importance to clear the reputation of the other from the horrible suspicion of having been the author of his brother's death, for the purpose of concentrating in himself the patronage of his father's office. The survivor of these brothers had been elevated to the cardinalate, and was designated for a long time as the cardinal of Valenza. The ultramontane people have known him better by the name of Cæsar Borgia, a name justly associated in their minds with all of which humanity in its depravity is susceptible of base, monstrous, and infamous. Never did father and son more resemble each other; and Alexander, satisfied with the power which he himself enjoyed in the papacy, now set no bounds and recognized no respect which interfered with his resolution to fix this idol of his monstrous affections in an ample and heritable dominion. The simple revolutions of the states of Italy offered no prospect of such an establishment, and Alexander with his son directed their eager eyes to the court of Lewis, and trusted that, in the profound convulsion which his invasion of the Peninsula must cause among its people, some opportunity must present itself at last for the building up of their dynasty. The invasion of Lewis found, therefore,

warm and strenuous advocates at Rome. All Italy indeed seemed changed. To the desertion of Alexander from the league, was added that of Venice. The senate of that proud aristocracy had been purchased; the city of the doges, for a miserable share in the spoil, consented to the overthrow of the Italian throne of Lombardy for the substitution of a French viceroyalty. Florence had learned too dearly the cost of Charles' friendship and his enmity; nor could she well decide to which she most had owed the difficulties and the expense that they had imposed on her. On this occasion she claimed the right of pursuing her private wars, and of exemption from all participation in the contest to be waged now another time for the independence of Italy. While yet the fate of this country might be said to be in doubt, the son of Alexander was despatched to the court of Lewis with the bill of divorce applied for by that prince to separate him from his wife, the daughter of Lewis XI., whose want of charms disgusted her lord, when, having himself ascended the throne of France, he no longer owed to her any portion of the splendour of its dignity. The favour of the pope now relieved him from bonds worn with so much impatience, and left him free to connect himself in marriage with the widow of his predecessor, who brought him as a dowry the valuable province of Brittany. For this service Charles created the cardinal nephew, duke of Valenza, whence his common name of duke Valentine, in the Italian histories. Hostilities were now about to commence. The Venetians on one side entered the Milanese, while the irresistible army of the French monarch, led by his best officers, entered the same territory on the side of France. On the approach of this formidable enemy the friends of Ludovico abandoned all hope; and as they had been attached from motives of interest alone to the fortunes of a prince whose restless ambition afforded them continual exercise of their warlike dispositions, and con-

tinual gains from the plunder of friends or enemies, so now even his most trusted adherents deserted his cause, and left an open way for the approach of the hostile armament.

Ludovico discovering every thing to be lost for the moment, and having put the castle of Milan in a condition to withstand the assaults of the French, at least until he should be able, with the aid of the emperor and the hired Swiss, to return with some prospect of a successful resistance, departed with his family and the most valuable of his effects for Germany. Bernadino da Corte, however, was not more faithful than the count of Cajazzo and the other officers to whom Ludovico had confided the defence of his realm. Scarcely, therefore, had he abandoned the walls of his capital, when the commandant, desirous of concluding such a treaty as he might be able to make with the leaders of the French, and having received from them a satisfactory price, delivered his charge, the last hope of his master, into the hands of the enemy. Genoa soon after followed the same fate; and the duke of Milan, one of the most powerful princes of Italy, sovereign of a state that had for upwards of a century and a half disturbed the peace of Italy and threatened it with a master—the prince who had introduced within the Alps a conqueror for the crown of Naples, and by the power of his arms had changed a dynasty in that kingdom; who had afterwards, almost by his word alone, raised up a power to expel the irresistible hordes which he had just before invited into Italy—this prince now found himself a fugitive, and saw his whole dominions, in the space of only twenty days, transferred from himself and his family, and placed under the rod and correction of a foreign conqueror.

On receiving the news of these successes, Lewis prepared to cross into Lombardy, where he was met by the Florentines, anxious, when fortune had given him the victory, to participate in the advantages of his

friendship. It was something of a triumph to reduce the pride of Florence to this necessity; but every thing was for the moment favourable to the desires of Lewis and his allies, in such a degree as to make this triumph of little value in their eyes. Duke Valentine thus began to reap the expected fruit of his labours, reducing under his rule the cities of Romagna, which, paying, before, an ecclesiastical tax to the church, had governed themselves with perfect freedom and independence in their municipal concerns. While these advances to power made the aspiring duke a dangerous enemy, the faithlessness of his character rendered him a no less dangerous friend; and Florence, to secure herself against him in either capacity, had no other means than those which she might derive from the alliance of Lewis. This at last was obtained, and Florence then returned to the prosecution of her designs against the revolted people of Pisa.

Before, however, this renewed hostility could be brought to any result, another change had broken out to alter the posture and complexion of affairs in the North. The departure of Lewis from Italy had instantly been followed by the return of Ludovico; and many cities, of which Milan was among the earliest, opened their gates to receive him. But the treason of this prince in first inviting the arms of France into Italy was not yet atoned for. No sooner had Lewis been informed of this revolution in his Italian affairs, than, assembling a second force, he ordered his general Tramoglia to re-conquer his rebellious provinces—a work of little more difficulty, as it proved on trial, in the execution than in the command. Ludovico was hurled again from the throne of his power; but, less fortunate than he had been before, he fell by treachery into the hands of his rival, and, being conducted a prisoner into France, he there terminated in confinement that life whose course had been a succession of the most important vicissitudes, and which had cost to Italy, be-

sides the years of war that had desolated her fields and wasted her treasure and separated her children, the sacrifice of the last boast which in the wreck of municipal liberty had still been left to them—the boast at least of national independence, and of freedom in the choice of their governors, if not in that of their governments. From this moment the duchy of Milan became the theatre of endless contests between the jarring interests and pretensions of the French, the Spanish, and the Austrians; and thus the overthrow of the family of the Sforzas, founded by the valour of Attendoli and confirmed by the address of Francesco, now became no less fatal to Italy than to the miserable individuals who thus in the third generation were deprived of a throne that had looked to stretch its wide and powerful wings over all the populations which lay between the unalterable boundaries of Italy. The magnitude of the events with which the name of this Ludovico is connected, and of the important revolutions effected by his agency, have had the effect of giving an air of greatness to his reputation which nothing in his character will justify. Crafty and revengeful, his craft has been mistaken for a nobler attribute, and his thirst of vengeance for strength and energy of purpose. Yet what wisdom or prudence would not have foreseen the danger of the French invasion with the knowledge, or even without a knowledge, of the pretensions of the duke of Orleans; and what energy of will is manifested in the shifting policy which followed every impulse of varying passion? Faithless, selfish, passionate, arrogant, a coward and a traitor; these words express at full, without omission of a single trait, the character of that individual whose lasting infamy is built upon the ruin of Italian independence, and whose punishment, beginning justly with himself, involved and still involves the whole population of Italy for more than ten succeeding generations of her children. Three hundred years since the commission of Ludovico's

crime against her freedom have elapsed, and the fourth commencing century still sees the effect of his treachery in the miseries of Lombardy, groaning under the insult and oppression of 200,000 armed barbarians ;—of Venice returning to her waves and her marshes,—of Romagna writhing under the exactions of its spiritual master, sustained in his tyranny by the savage arms of Austria and the treacherous policy of France—of Italy, indeed, from both her seas, impoverished, degraded, and oppressed ; ashamed of the glories of her early days, and hopeless for generations of succeeding time, which seems to promise nothing for her regeneration.

To those cities which on the departure of Lewis from Italy had returned to their allegiance to Sforza, the second appearance of the French as conquerors was an overwhelming blow. In proportion to their ability to sustain the exactions of his rapacity, the triumphant conqueror levied contributions in money upon the citizens of those which he pretended to consider as revolted towns. From Milan 300,000 ducats were extorted to defray the expenses of the ambition of its conqueror, and from Pavia one third of the same sum for the same purpose, and under the same insulting pretext.

In the midst of these important events, involving the destiny of the whole Peninsula, Florence continued a silent spectatress, intent alone upon the result of her still-continued exertions against her rebels of Pisa. Lucca, Genoa, and Siena, offered to purchase from Lewis the independence of the cities in rebellion against the Florentines, to be secured in their liberties as a balance of power between the little states in that part of Italy. Many officers of his army added to this tempting offer their entreaties for the protection of the gallant Pisans, with whose sufferings and whose heroic fortitude the whole army of Lewis deeply sympathized. True, however, to his compact with Florence, the king

refused all countenance to the rebels, and yielding to the demand of the Florentines the aid which they claimed in fulfilment of the treaty, he sent to their assistance a reinforcement of 800 lances and 5000 mounted Swiss under the conduct of Beaumont, the only officer of his camp who supported their cause. Relying upon the efficiency of such an aid, the Florentines now looked forward to the no less speedy than inevitable fall of the obstinate city, which had so long baffled their strength and wasted their treasures. The first attack was calculated to confirm the not unreasonable hope. All the impetuosity of the French, directed against bulwarks accustomed only to the formal and but little vigorous attack of the Italians, soon opened a breach for the admission of Beaumont's army, horse and foot. But the city was not yet conquered. Within the walls a deep and impracticable ditch had been excavated by the besieged, and the hurried entrance of the assailants exposed them, in the unexpectedly confined area between the broken walls and the ditch, to an attack on the part of the citizens which might prove fatal even to the bold and disciplined troops of France. From this moment, in which the French commander deemed it most prudent to draw off his forces, the siege began to languish. Beaumont himself was the only individual to whom the success of the attack was really an object of solicitude. To his army and his officers the cause of the Pisans appeared in all respects worthier than that which they had been compelled to espouse; there was a gallantry in their resistance which won the admiration of men, who themselves, in the spirit of gallant adventure, had followed the fortunes of their native prince to the conquest of kingdoms; the best claim to which appeared to them the valour by which they were won. It was therefore impossible to urge the attack with forces so disposed, and so reluctant to obtain the victory. Continual reinforcements were pouring into Pisa, which

Beaumont found it impossible to intercept; and when at last ambassadors arrived from that city with a tender of submission to Lewis, and a firm declaration of the resolution of the citizens to perish in the defence of their walls against the persecutions of Florence, it became impossible to check the enthusiasm of the army in favour of this patriotic and devoted heroism. Under these circumstances, and apprehensive, perhaps, that the aid which Lewis had intended for the support of the Florentines might be now easily diverted to the opposite party, Beaumont thought it most expedient to comply with the loudly expressed wish of all his army, and return into Lombardy.

This untoward campaign was now to be excused to the king. His arms had been unsuccessful; and every loss of reputation to them, besides the mortification of his pride, was manifestly detrimental to his most important interests. In the alternative of acknowledging themselves the conquered, or of throwing the censure upon the Florentines, there could be little hesitation on the part of those who were called to render an account to Lewis of the failure of that expedition upon which he had despatched them. It was insisted that Florence had withheld the necessary and promised supplies, without which it was neither expedient nor proper to undertake the reduction of Pisa. The calumniated city hastened to justify herself, and commissioned two of her citizens to appear before the king in her behalf. With Francesco della Casa was associated in this office the more illustrious Niccolo Machiavelli. The arms of France, however, were to be vindicated; and Lewis, whether persuaded by the representations of his officers, or willing to sustain the reputation of his military at every expense of justice, was deaf to the arguments and eloquence of the Florentine commissioners. Ten thousand crowns were demanded as a fine or an indemnity, and Florence had no alternative but to obey or be forced to obedience.

In the meanwhile a new but not unexpected danger began to threaten the state of Florence on the other side. Having effected the establishment of his rule in Romagna, duke Valentine appeared to have extended the views of his ambition against the territories in allegiance to Florence, if not against the liberty of that city itself. By persuasion of the Venetians he was induced, as a ready step towards the accomplishment of whatever views he might in secret entertain, to adopt the cause of Piero against the republic. Without, however, an open declaration of his intentions upon this point, and at the same time without any avowed hostility of purpose, at the head of an army formidable for the means of resistance possessed by the Florentines, he entered within the boundaries of Tuscany. Passing like an enemy through the open country, he laid waste and ravaged all that did not seem to offer a sufficiently imposing appearance of strength to restrain the wanton ferocity of his disposition; and having left thus the marks of his devastating progress, but without effecting or appearing to have contemplated any permanent conquest, he retired from Tuscany on the way towards Rome to join the army of Lewis, already in the South, for the occupation of Naples. But though the disguised invasion of duke Valentine had resulted in no permanent change in the affairs of Tuscany, the people of Florence had not been deceived as to its real intention. They knew that any commotion in the city on his approach would have been the signal to the invader for the restoration of the Medici; and although they perceived at the same time no slight indications among the officers of the government to second such an attempt, they had so ordered the affairs of the city that not the slightest tumult occurred to afford a pretext to the disaffected within or the watchful enemy without, for proposing any change or attempting any forcible modification of the constituted authorities. On the part of France, the restoration of Piero, could it

have been effected in such a manner as to save the faith and honour of her king, would probably not have proved unacceptable. The troops and officers of his army indeed had affected no concealment of repugnance to the Florentines. But Lewis was in acknowledged treaty with them, and Valentine was in the service of Lewis. When, therefore, it appeared that no excuse was offered by the citizens themselves for any interference in their concerns, an order of the French monarch was delivered to the duke, forbidding any demonstration of hostility to the faithful allies of his majesty. Indeed Florence had no cause to complain of this prince who had received her into his alliance. While the band of Valentine's freebooters were spoiling the fields and villages through which they passed, under the safeguard of the permission granted by the Florentine magistracy, the commanding army of the French, flushed with victory in the North, and marching to conquest in the South with all the order of a civil procession, held their way through the territories of Florence which lay in the line of their march.

This passage of the armies of France was in the meanwhile bringing the destinies of the Neapolitan throne of the Aragonese to a crisis. The ambitious pretender who had succeeded to the claims of Charles, was, like that monarch, bold and resolute; but adding to his boldness and resolution a prudence and a calm reflection unknown to the character of the former invader. Before he departed, therefore, towards the South, he saw the necessity of avoiding the error into which his predecessor had formerly fallen, and made use of every care to secure himself uninterrupted controul of those states which he should leave in his rear. While possessing the friendship of the cities of Italy, he thought it prudent by every means in his power to cut them off the temptation of change, and, purchasing at some expense of treasure the alliance of the German Maximilian, he effectually deprived them of the

only foreign aid to which they could look in case that any jealousy of his success should induce them to revolt from his service. Thus certain of all that he was leaving behind him, Lewis had next to gain new friends in the country whose limits he was about to violate. The king of Spain, by every principle of interest, was bound to the support of his family in possession of the crown of Naples. He had therefore united with it in a formal league, and his troops were already, under the most renowned of his captains, in possession of important posts under the dominion of the Neapolitan king. It was not till the arrival of the French in his dominions that Frederic had an opportunity of discovering the treachery of his kinsman, and the character of the officer who had been chosen to carry it into effect would hardly admit of suspicion. Gonsalvo of Cordova, distinguished as the hero of the Spanish wars of that adventurous and gallant age; extolled as the conqueror of the Moors, and sent by his sovereign into Italy to check the victorious career of the chivalric French, was now to assume another character, and present himself as the executor of the treacherous intrigues of the French and Spanish cabinets. On the abandonment of their cause by their Spanish allies, the Neapolitans resigned all hope of success in resistance, and prepared for a new submission to the arms of the invading prince. Capua, however, refused to follow the example and fortunes of the other cities; it held out with a courage and obstinacy which did honour to its fidelity and valour, but could not save it against the united arms of the Spaniards and French. Its reduction, nevertheless, cost the assailants more labour and a greater loss than their former easy victories had led them to anticipate. When, therefore, it was taken at last, the indiscriminate slaughter of its inhabitants of either sex and of every age, bore witness to the rage with which the allied robbers had experienced even a momentary check in the progress of their depreda-

tions. The convents were not even a sanctuary for those, who, having abandoned the life of this world, had devoted themselves to the nearer worship of the deity and the contemplation of the world to come. The sacred portals of the chaste cloisters were thrown open to the brutal soldiery, which, led by a prince who once had been a dignitary of the church, and even then derived his power from his uncle's office as high-priest of the Christian church, were suffered to drag from the altars the victims of violence, which scarcely merits the name of a human passion.

After this fatal event, despairing of his fortunes and moved at the impending danger of such cities as might still uselessly cling to his party, king Frederic resolved to abandon the contest. He had but the choice of treating with his victorious enemy as a vanquished but a not dishonoured antagonist, or of imploring the protection of the Spanish king, whose breach of faith had reduced him to this unhappy alternative. Having resolved upon trying his fortune rather with his avowed and open adversary than with the friend by whom he had already been cheated to his ruin, he accepted the duchy of Anjou from Lewis as his sovereign, with an annual revenue of 30,000 francs.

Italy now, from the Alps to the Sicilian straits, had changed her state. The foreign king had marched as in conquest through her cities, receiving, in the name of an alliance, their too solicitous submission ; and the pope, who now at last had come to obtain a preponderating influence in its secular government, divided the rule of the Peninsula. Florence, even now in the ruin of her institutions and on the verge of a hopeless servitude herself, still woke for a moment from her deep lethargy, and started at the destruction of all that Italy had so long valued in her long struggle, impending in the advancement of the papal supremacy as a temporal power. She knew, moreover, that the unnatural league which for a moment seemed to unite the interests of

France and Rome, must break of itself when the extinction of all their common enemies should leave them to the adjustment of their several portions of the acquired gains. Her policy was obviously to hasten this event by the excitement of early jealousies between these two powers. She therefore artfully renewed her league with Lewis; and by stipulating to furnish him with large sums of money, which his expensive wars made necessary to his ultimate success, she obtained from him fresh aid for the reduction of the still unconquered rebels of Pisa. While this object of her greatest desire remained yet to be accomplished, she could not behold without uneasiness the efforts of Piero to recover his interest in her government. Many other cities, encouraged by the successful resistance of Pisa, and instigated, no doubt, by the secret enemies of the Florentines, resolved to try the same experiment; and Florence within a few months perceived herself stripped of all the subject cities that had constituted her strength. Arezzo, Cortona, San Sepolcro, and Anghiari, revolted from her rule, and left her little beyond the country immediately surrounding her walls. It was in this condition that her treaty with France became of manifest avail to her. All the chiefs of the revolted cities, and more especially Vitellozzo of Arezzo, apprehensive of the faithless and unhesitating ambition of Valentine, with one accord submitted themselves for protection to the guardianship of Lewis, by whom they were immediately compelled to return to their former allegiance.

The death of Savonarola, which had been expected to strike a fatal and a final blow to the democratic influence, grown up in Florence again on the flight of Piero de' Medici, had not resulted in any permanent gain to his enemies. The council, instituted in accordance with his views, still continued to direct the affairs of the commonwealth; nor had the party of the rich been able, after twice returning to the high offices

of Gonfalonier individuals friendly to their views, to succeed in any thing against its authority. A slight attempt, or rather, we should say, a hint thrown out preparatory to an attempt, on the part of Guido Antonio Vespucci, the second of these officers, was met by so furious a demonstration of passionate attachment to the existing order, that nothing had for some time seemed practicable, even to the boldest of those who longed for an opportunity of advancing their private interests, and erecting an individual sovereignty like that of the Medici, disguised, but not restricted by the name of republican laws, on the ruins of the popular immunities. The time was, however, approaching when the pressure of circumstances without began to render the people themselves desirous of a government more consolidated than that which they had given themselves; and which, abundantly competent to manage the domestic affairs of the city, did not seem sufficient to protect it against its foreign enemies in the numerous and important revolutions which were continually changing the aspect of Italian politics. This change occurred in the year 1502; and the election of Pietro Soderini as Gonfalonier for life, to supersede the officers who formerly had exercised for two months at a time the chief executive power, effected, with the consent of the populace itself, a thorough revolution in the government, and struck an irresistible blow against the democratic supremacy. Other modifications were also introduced into the government; and from this fatal year the Florentines had nothing but the good fortune of a happy choice in their supreme executive officers to save them from a tyranny to which they had abandoned themselves.* During all this time the

* "In the new position of Italy, continually menaced by absolute princes, whose deliberations were secret, and who united perfidy with force, the Florentines became sensible that their government could not act with the requisite discretion and secrecy while it continued to be changed every two months. Their allies even complained that no secret could be confided to them, without becoming

war had been slowly proceeding with Pisa; and one of the first fruits of Soderini's election was expected to be the termination of this struggle by the conquest of the revolted place. Much greater events, however, were occurring in the other parts of the Peninsula to signalize this remarkable period of its history. That which should have been foreseen as the inevitable consequence of the admission of foreign influence in the adjustment of its quarrels, had already begun to manifest itself, even earlier than those who might then be considered the most profound in political calculations had been able to predict. France and Spain, sole arbiters of Italy, had, even before its effectual reduction, discovered a mutual jealousy, which now burst out with a sudden impetuosity into hatred and war. By superior numbers the soldiers of Henry had expected to crush the feeble force opposed to them; and their impetuous valour comprehended no danger in the cautious and defensive warfare waged against them by Gonsalvo, who once again, having assumed the warrior, was adding, by daily acts of valour and judgment, to the vast reputation with which he had entered upon

known, at the same time, to the whole republic. They accordingly judged it necessary to place at the head of the state a single magistrate, who should be present at every council, and who should be the depositary of every communication requiring secrecy. This chief, who was to retain the name of Gonfalonier, was elected, like the doge of Venice, for life; he was to be lodged in the palace, and to have a salary of 100 florins a month. The law which created a Gonfalonier for life was voted on the 16th of August, 1502; but it was not till the 22d of September following that the grand council chose Pietro Soderini to fill that office. He was a man universally respected; of mature age, without ambition, without children; and the republic never had reason to repent its choice. The republic, at the same time, introduced the authority of a single man into the administration, and suppressed it in the tribunals. A law of the 15th of April, 1502, abolished the offices of podesta and of captain of justice, and supplied their places by the *ruota*; a tribunal composed of five judges, of whom four must agree in passing sentence: each, in his turn, was to be president of the tribunal for six months. This rotation caused the name of *ruota* to be given to the supreme courts of law at Rome and Florence."—*Sismondi.*

his campaigns in Italy. If to the common troops of Lewis there appeared no danger in the handful of men by which the interests of Spain were to be sustained, to their leaders it did not seem necessary to take the Italians themselves into account; detaching from their interests by continued insult that party which the former treachery of the Spaniards had driven to espouse their cause. A single circumstance, which owed its origin to this imprudent conduct, served, however, to undeceive them, though too late; and in many subsequent defeats the arms of France might attribute to this overweening confidence their failure and disgrace.

Provoked by the contemptuous treatment which they received at the hands of the French, the Italians now almost universally adopted the quarrel of the opposite party. Yet misled by the ease with which they had been suffered to pass, as in conquest, from the Alps to almost the opposite extremity of Italy, the vain though gallant soldiers of Lewis could not accustom themselves to look upon the children of this degenerate soil with other feelings than those of contempt. It is therefore hardly possible to comprehend the feeling with which, on being summoned to a parly, they heard the challenge of thirteen native Italians in the service of the king of Spain to an equal number chosen from the strongest and the best of the chivalry of France, to determine, if not the question of possession and occupation, yet to settle that at least of superiority in courage and prowess. The challenge was accepted; and an obstinate contest, in presence of both armies, gave to the Italians a perfect victory. Two only of the French were slain, and ten were marched as prisoners before the triumphant steps of the Italians, undiminished in numbers and proud of vindicating the character of their country and their countrymen. This occurrence, which still betrays a lingering of the romantic spirit belonging to those which have been denominated the heroic ages of nations, was of the utmost importance to

the cause of the enemies of France. The courage of the Italians was revived, and in like proportion the hopes of their adversaries were suffered to languish.

The contests of the rival powers, which from beyond the Alps had now obtained a permanent footing in Italy, were not, however, the most important events by which her destiny was through a thousand fluctuations to be at last finally settled. Alexander, and his son duke Valentine, notwithstanding the success with which their plans had for the most part been crowned since the coming of Lewis into their unhappy country, and in spite of all the plunder which their various conquests had enabled them to collect in the nature of the spoils of war, were constantly reduced by the excesses of their private lives to the most absolute want of the ordinary means not merely of carrying on the affairs of their respective governments, but even of supplying the common demands of their daily necessities. To remedy this deficiency, the commission of private crime, in which the power of their office, though used as a shield for impunity, was not implicated politically, became daily requisite and of daily occurrence. The suspicion which attached itself from this circumstance to all their acts, attends the last scene of Alexander's life; and, even if unjust, revenges the wrongs of humanity sustained at his hands, and satisfies the natural desire which would gladly find something of retributive justice in the death of one who had been in his life a scourge to his fellows. This fortunate event in the history of the Church, and indeed of Italy at large, occurred in the month of August of the year 1503.

Attacked by the same malady as his father, and labouring under the same suspicions, duke Valentine could not have been overtaken by any calamity so fatal to his prosperity, nor at a more unfortunate moment. No sooner had the heads of the principal families of Rome become acquainted with the death of their perfidious enemy, than they rushed to arms with the in-

tention of liberating themselves from what still remain-ed of his hated name and power, in his son. The courage of the duke, however, did not fail him on this occasion; and his enemies were unable, in the midst of the general execration which accompanied the mention of his name among those who had so recently been subjects of his father's rule, so to direct the public indignation as to deprive him at once of that power and those rights which he had acquired during the life of Alexander. They were therefore pleased to free themselves on any conditions from the dangers of his personal residence among them, and easily suffered him to withdraw from the city, while the conclave, engaged in the choice of a successor to his father, should be in session. The choice of the cardinal Piccolomini, who took the name of Pius III. could hardly be expected to give peace to the church; his health was manifestly declining at the moment of his election, and his death, which ended the brief exercise of sovereign power to which he had been called, before he had enjoyed its dangerous sweets or borne its cares a month, convened the college of cardinals again for the purpose of naming his successor. The ambitious projects of the cardinal della Rovere now began to develope themselves. He perceived the still remaining influence of duke Valentine; and sacrificing his long-cherished resentment for the injuries received from the father, now terminated the hostility of years by accepting the papacy from the hands of the son. Assuming on his election the name of Julius II. this prelate introduced a new condition into the affairs of Italy. He listened to the counsels of the Florentines, and placed the venerable authority of the pontificate once more in opposition to that of the Venetian aristocracy. In the meantime the decline of the influence of Valentine, and the successive loss of his dominions, increased the authority of the church by restoring to its head the cities which, having been formerly separated from it by the

act and the consent of the pope, might now have laid claim to a perfect liberty or independence at least. As these defections were adding strength to the authority of Julius, duke Valentino could not but perceive the impossibility of resisting the odium which his long career of crime had excited against his person. Deceived at last himself, he fell into the hands of the Spanish leader, and for the first time learned to estimate, in its application to himself, the system of fraud upon which his own power had been founded and sustained.

These changes in the ecclesiastical states in some measure restored a temporary and precarious peace to all the parts of Italy north of the line which separated the states of the Church from the disputed kingdom of the French and Spanish in the South. A few undistinguished actions still kept up the war between the Pisans and their proud masters of Florence; but Soderini had not yet succeeded in attaining the first end of his election by the reduction of the resolute rebels. In Naples, however, the conflict still continued to rage, and still the conduct of the Spanish leader and the favour of the natives continued to sustain the party of the Aragonese against the superior number and equal boldness of the invading troops. Day after day, however, the cause of the French became less promising. The banished son of Lorenzo de' Medici had entered their ranks, and one important victory obtained by Gonsalvo, secured to Spain the ascendancy in Italy, thus changing at a single blow her relations and her dependence; and freed the Florentines from the most dangerous of the enemies of her liberties. Piero was drowned on the retreat of the French army, in an attempt to cross the river Garigliano. He had not attained the 34th year of his life; yet he had witnessed in his country, and experienced in his own fortunes, all those revolutions which marked the era of the passage from the middle to the modern ages of European history.

When now it became no longer doubtful that the triumph of the Spanish arms could not be arrested by any longer opposition of the French, it seemed expedient to Lewis to conclude the unprofitable contest in which he found himself to have expended the treasures and resources of his proper dominions. A treaty of peace, therefore, concluded with Ferdinand, abandoned to that prince the entire possession of Naples with all it's dependencies; resigning all pretension to the crown which it had required the strength of his kingdom, expended during the better part of two entire reigns, to wrest from a monarch in whose family it could never have become a source of possible danger to the interests of France. The two monarchs met in person at Savona, and confirmed, with tokens of personal affection, the treaty which they had made as the heads and leaders of opposing interests. From this meeting Florence had been led to expect the adjustment of her difficulty with Pisa; but the royal umpires, unwilling to settle a question which, while yet in doubt, appeared to hold the Florentines in a kind of dependence, refused to decide in the case. Yet Pisa well comprehended that such a refusal was tantamount to an adoption of her quarrel; and Florence, on the other hand, conceiving it to be an abandonment of the right of arbitriment, prepared to exert that power which she might find in her own strength, for the recovery of the city upon which she looked as her own by every right. Her preparations, however, were suddenly interrupted by order of Lewis, who demanded the payment of a sum of money as the condition upon which he would be willing to suffer Pisa to be attacked. Scarcely had this singular demand been complied with on the part of the Florentines, when envoys from the king of Spain, advancing similar pretensions, demanded for that monarch an equal sum as the price of his neutrality. In the resolution of the citizens to recover possession of the revolted place at every hazard and expense, this

demand, the right of which she had neither the time nor the power to discuss, was also complied with by Florence; and then no barrier remained to keep her from the occupation of the long-desired walls except the valour with which they might be defended. To the effects of this valour it was not contemplated to expose the forces of the republic, which had so often experienced its impetuosity and been compelled to retire before its obstinate and irresistible power. All thought of effecting the forcible reduction of the place was abandoned, and a strict blockade was resorted to as the last means of compelling the submission of those who had proved themselves more than an equal match for the soldiers of Florence in the trial of arms.

Against an enemy thus shut up within their walls the Pisans had no means of defence; the want of provisions soon began to combat among them for the Florentines. After resisting the horrors of famine while a possibility of relief appeared to remain, the wretched inhabitants at last abandoned themselves to despair; and though there were among them many who would have preferred their total extermination to the thought of returning under the rule of their hated masters, yet the greater number, unable to resist the agonies of hunger and sickness, were clamorous for an accord. Florence had no object so much at heart as the recovery of her subject city, on whatever terms that recovery might be effected. Apprehensive of driving the Pisans to desperation, and of some change in her own fortunes while yet the rebels were unsubdued, she was willing to make every sacrifice of feeling in offering terms to the conquered. These terms were accepted. Pisa was to return to her allegiance on condition of perfect impunity to those who had been even most active in her revolution, the city herself was to pay nothing by way of indemnity for the expenses of a fourteen years' war for her reduction; nor even was restitution to be made of that property, which, belonging

to Florence before the revolt, had been confiscated to the use of the revolutionary government. On these conditions the three commissioners of the victorious Florentines were permitted to occupy the city in the name of their government; and thus a second time the want of food, occasioned by the desertion of her allies, had effected the subjugation of Pisa, and obtained for the Florentines that which they could not acquire by the power of their arms and the valour of their citizens. It is remarkable, that of the three commissioners who had conducted this treaty, and who now, on the tenth of June of the year 1509, more than a century after its first acquisition, restored to Florence her former dominion in Pisa, the most prominent individual was a Capponi, descended from that Gino whose ability had formerly reduced the Pisans to the subjection of their rivals, and whose moderation had secured the permanence of the conquest.

The cost of the various expeditions fitted out for the purpose which had thus at last been effected, while it might almost be considered as excessive in the comparison with the advantage acquired, teaches us to estimate not merely the actual situation of Florence in regard to her commercial prosperity, but also as to the importance in which she must have been held by the greater powers of Europe, when we find the monarchs of the three principal European nations conspiring, as it were, to plunder the inexhaustible stores of her treasury. To the king of France the sum of 100,000 florins had been paid under various pretences put forth by that prince, whose real claims to any portion of that amount were his necessities and his power; 50,000 to the king of Spain, with even less apparent right; and 40,000 to the emperor, without even the shadow of a pretext on his part for exacting such a tribute; were the price which Florence was compelled to pay for the mere reputation of her wealth, inasmuch as not one cent of this immense outlay of treasure was directly

used for the conduct of the war against Pisa, which was at the same time to be sustained at no inconsiderable cost, both in the actual form of taxes, and indirectly by the withdrawal of monies, to be so expended, from the use of commerce and industry.

The little war of Florence against Pisa had occupied all the thoughts of her citizens. The time was past in which they had acted as the guardians of Italian liberty, by maintaining in their hands the balance between the several Cisalpine states. No longer having the consciousness, therefore, of the controlling power, she ceased to interest herself in the affairs of those of her neighbours who had not direct connexion with her own immediate policy, and shut herself out from all communication with the governments which the French invasion, and the occurrences succeeding that event, had made of interest and importance to the general welfare of the Peninsula. At the same time the senate and aristocracy of Venice had assumed the high and holy office abandoned by the Florentines; an office so much the more imposing, as the powers with which it brought them in contact were foreign nations, either of which, in the ordinary requisites for a successful war, might be considered a match for Italy, formed into one kingdom and actuated by one will. The following extract from the author of the "History of the Italian Republics," will serve to show the weight of the hostility which her defence of Italian independence excited against her; while it will also manifest the power of a wholesome principle to reinforce the weak and sustain them against the attacks of unprincipled power.

"The period in which the republic of Venice was delivered from the terror of the Turks was also that of the death of Alexander VI., and of the ruin of his son Cæsar Borgia. The opportunity appeared to the Signoria favourable for extending its possessions in Romagna. That province had been long the object of

its ambition. Venice had acquired by treachery, on the 24th of February, 1441, the pricipality of Ravenna, governed for 166 years by the house of Polenta. In 1463 it had purchased Cervia, with its salt-marshes, from Malatesta IV., one of the princes of Rimini; upon the death of Cæsar Borgia, it took possession of Faenza, the principality of Manfredi; of Rimini, the principality of Malatesta; and of several fortresses. Imola and Forli, governed by the Alidosi and the Ordelaffi, alone remained to be subdued, in order to make Venice mistress of the whole of Romagna. The Venetians offered the pope the same submission, the same annual tribute, for which those petty princes were acknowledged pontifical vicars. But Julius II., who had succeeded Borgia, although violent and irascible, had a strong sense of his duty as a pontiff and as an Italian. He was determined on preserving the states of the church intact for his successors. He rejected all nepotism, all aggrandizement of his family; and would have accused himself of unpardonable weakness, if he suffered others to usurp what he refused to give his family. He haughtily exacted the restitution of all that the Venetians possessed in the states of the church; and as he could not obtain it from them, he consented to receive it from the hands of Lewis and Maximilian, who combined to despoil the republic. He, however, communicated to the Venetians the projects formed against them, and it was not till they appeared resolved to restore him nothing, that he concluded his compact with their enemies.

"The league against Venice, signed at Cambray, on the 10th of December, 1508, by Margaret of Austria, daughter of Maximilian, and the cardinal d'Amboise, prime minister of Louis, was only the completion of the secret treaty of Blois, of the 22d of September, 1504. No offence had been given, to justify this perfidious compact. Maximilian, who detested Louis, had the same year endeavoured to attack him in the

Milanese; but the Venetians refused him a passage; and after three months' hostilities, the treaty between the emperor and the republic was renewed, on the 7th of June, 1508. Louis XII., whom the Venetians defended, and Maximilian, with whom they were reconciled, had no other complaint against them than that they had no king, and that their subjects thus excited the envy of those who had. The two monarchs agreed to divide between them all the *terra firma* of the Venetians, to abandon to Ferdinand all their fortresses in Apulia, to the pope the lordships in Romagna, to the houses of Este and Gonzaga the small districts near the Po; and thus to give all an interest in the destruction of the only state sufficiently strong to maintain the independence of Italy. France was the first to declare war against the republic of Venice, in the month of January, 1509. Hostilities commenced on the 15th of April; on the 27th of the same month, the pope excommunicated the doge and the republic. The war of the league of Cambray showed the Italians, for the first time, what formidable forces the Transalpine nations could bring against them. Maximilian arrived to besiege Padua in the month of September, 1509. He had in his army Germans, Swiss, French, Spaniards, Savoyards; troops of the pope, of the marquis of Mantua, and of the duke of Modena; in all more than 100,000 men, with 100 pieces of cannon."

A doubtful issue to the exterminating war now waged against Venice would have secured the success of the league; but when an uninterrupted series of victories drove the Venetians from city to city, till at last they had little remaining in Italy beyond the marshes which defended their disheartened city, that saving jealousy, which usually interferes with the ultimate successes of all political combinations, for the accomplishment of temporary purposes, began to exercise its influence in behalf of the unfortunate Venetians. The terrors of pope Julius were first excited at

the rapid and resistless progress of arms, whose prosperity offered him but fleeting advantages, while they secured to the Church a lasting check in the preponderating influence of Spain, France, and Germany, among the states of Italy. He accordingly prepared to withdraw with as little violence as might be practicable from the league; and when it became necessary to assume a more unequivocal ground, removing the interdict which he had but a short time before placed upon Venice, he declared himself ready to espouse her cause, and resolute in the determination to sustain the integrity of the Italian states and the independence of Italy. When once the impetuous prelate had resolved this change of policy, it was impossible for him to enter upon its practice with that prudence which so total and so comparatively sudden an alteration in his views should seem to have required. He now peremptorily called on the Italians to arm in their defence, and indicated the displeasure of the Church as a penalty for adherence to that cause which he had condemned by his desertion. Florence, however, had found her account in her neutrality, and would not now be driven from its protection. Having reduced the city of Pisa, her Gonfalonier was now meditating the recovery of other places, and did not choose to hazard the popularity which had obtained for him his high and responsible dignity, and which the successful result of his recent war of conquest had greatly increased, by the cost of a conflict which might not prove successful, and which could not prove other than expensive, with enemies like the kings of France and Spain and the emperor of Germany, not to mention the duke of Ferrara, and the many cities of Italy which still adhered to the league.

In the midst of the new combinations which now appeared to be forming, the most obvious means of attack upon the pope was not neglected by his enemies. It was remembered how fatal the call of a council had

always proved in later years to the papal authority; and how, in the days of Ladislaus, it had rendered the head of the Church a dependent and powerless phantom of sovereignty. At this moment the influence of the Church had reached its greatest height by means of its equal and successful alliance with the great powers of Europe, which had on this occasion combined against the comparatively narrow state of Venice. To reduce this influence by ordinary means might prove no easy undertaking even for the proud monarchs whose alliance the pope had deserted. Recourse was therefore had to the extraordinary measure of calling a council, in which the affairs of the Church being taken out of the hands of its prince and guide, should be regulated and reformed according to the general opinion of its necessities, or to the desires of those under whose direction the reforming tribunal was erected.

Florence, had she been as anxious to preserve the spirit of her neutrality as she herself had insisted on the respect with which its form and letter was to be regarded by others, would have rejected the request of the ministers of Lewis, who had desired permission of the Florentines to summon this council in their city of Pisa. But Soderini was greatly under the influence of the French, and the people themselves had long been looking for the adoption of measures calculated to produce a reform in the Church as promised in the predictions of Savonarola. The request for the use of the city of Pisa was granted, and the call went forth for the assembling this congress, which, under the pretext of a spiritual authority, was to decide, so far as it might be found to have power, the fate of the political contest now waging between the Church, as a temporal sovereignty, and the crowns of France, Germany, and Spain. Julius, in the interim between the summoning and assembling of the council of Pisa, was not wanting to the important crisis on which his fate

was hung. He summoned in his own name a similar congress to assemble in Rome, and by authority of which he denounced all those who should venture to attend the sitting of the unauthorized body collected together at Pisa. This activity on the part of the pope confounded the Florentines. The clergy and laity of Pisa had unwillingly suffered the entry of the cardinals who were to compose the council within their walls, and every obstacle was thrown in the way of their organization. The churches were shut against them, and the pious adherents to the high authority of the pope were not afraid to manifest the greatest horror of the rebellious individuals whose opposition seemed in their eyes a sacrilege. Florence had already offended the Church by her permission granted for the formation of this council; but at the same time she was not pleased at the appearance of the soldiers of Lewis within her territory. These soldiers had been despatched for the protection of the body assembling by her own grant within one of her dependencies, and which indeed, without the security of their protection, might not be able to form itself into an organized body. She threw herself now again upon her violated neutrality, and refused to suffer 300 lances, ordered for the use of the council, to enter her territory. To the fury of Julius was now added the displeasure of the French; and Florence found that her timidity and want of address had converted all those who would have been her friends, and who had been solicitous for her friendship, into open enemies. Against the arms of France she was however prepared, but the machinations of Rome she could not contend with; Julius had already succeeded in inspiring with his own fears the king of Spain, who looked with suspicion on the progress of the arms of Lewis; and the expression of his intention to favour the not yet extinguished views of the Medici to the restoration of their rule in Florence, next succeeded in detaching from the cause of France the pow-

erful influence of that family. The cardinal, who at this moment was considered as its efficient head, was chosen legate of the pontifical forces. In the city, the popularity of Soderini had excited a numerous party against him, while it drove them to the necessity of seeking foreign succour in case of any occasional opportunity for effecting his ruin by a change in the order of the state. The religious party was violent in opposition to his administration, because he had compelled the clergy to bear a portion of the expenses which the wars for the recovery of Pisa and other circumstances had increased beyond the ordinary sources of the revenue to supply. With all these causes of discontent, the difference of opinion in regard to the expediency of opening the gates of Pisa to the revolutionary council, tended greatly to increase the dissatisfaction of one party, and to urge to greater affectation of power the chiefs of the other. By order of Soderini the cathedral church, which had been shut against the contumelious cardinals, was opened, and the Pisans were compelled to receive the council thus forced on them by their masters. Very soon, however, the members, wearied themselves of the continued ill-will manifested by the citizens, and terrified at the dangers to which they imagined themselves exposed, adopted the resolution of removing to Milan, and Tuscany was liberated from this cause of civil dissention. Still Julius did not think it expedient to remove the interdict which he had placed on the city. When, at last, he chose to restore the Florentines to all the rights of which his anger had deprived them, it began to be apparent that his influence had re-produced in Florence all the evils which the early quarrels of Rome and her refractory dependents had caused to her before the establishment of her democracy. While the interdict had remained in force, the greatest loss had been experienced by those of the Florentines alone whom it had not been intended to injure. The cessation of their

functions had deprived the priests of the great sources of their revenues, while the people perceived no very fearful consequences to result from the ban under which they had been placed; nor was it till Julius began to discover the waste of his spiritual arms, and the loss which they caused to his own inferior ministers, that he thought of suspending his anger. In this, however, he effected all that he had failed to do by the promulgation of the interdict. The authority to perform the ordinary offices of the church had been freely granted by the pope; but those into whose hands it had been consigned, abusing their trust, admitted by favour those only whom it might please them to admit to a participation in the imagined advantages of the Seven Sacraments. By the partial distribution of the spiritual offices, thus become favours, a new party was raised up to distract still further the affairs of the government; the rites of the Church were administered through political feeling or for political views; the sick, or the friends of the sick, who sought the consolations of religion, were compelled to purchase them by the promise of support to the ecclesiastical party; and the fury of religious enthusiasm mingled with the warmth of political animosity, and excited the minds of the several parties to a contest for party victory, by the neglect or abandonment even of party principle. Thus it was again that Florence lost sight of the fundamental objects of her government, and suffered every thing to tend with increasing velocity to the restoration of monarchical rule.

While these things were passing in Florence, all the rest of Italy was no less involved in the chances and changes of war. The opposition which Julius had raised to the progress of the French, from being feeble and unfortunate at the outset, began at last to gather strength and assume an attitude of offence. "A powerful Spanish army meanwhile advanced from Naples to the aid of the pope, under the command of Ray-

mond de Cardona; and laid siege to Bologna on the 26th of January, 1512. The French had driven to despair, by their extortions, the people of the provinces which they had seized from Venice. On the 3d of February, Brescia revolted against them. Gaston de Foix, duc de Nemours, and nephew of Louis XII., had, at the age of twenty-two, been just placed at the head of the French army. With a rapidity ever memorable, he in turn successfully opposed his two enemies. Having, on the 5th of February, entered Bologna, he forced the Spaniards to raise the siege and make a precipitate retreat through Romagna. He instantly returned to attack the Venetians, and on his road defeated one of their armies. He retook Brescia by assault, on the 19th of February, and punished that unhappy city by a frightful massacre of its inhabitants; but pillage disorganized and corrupted his army, and six weeks elapsed before he could return to Romagna, to oppose the armies of Spain and of the pope, which had again advanced. He forced them to give battle, near Ravenna, on Easter Sunday, the 11th of April, 1512. It was the most murderous battle that Italy had yet seen: nearly 20,000 dead covered the plain on which it was fought. Gaston de Foix was, for the last time, victorious. The formidable Spanish infantry slowly retreated, without permitting itself to be broken in any part. Gaston, furious at its escaping him, made one last effort against it, and was killed.

"The death of Gaston proved the signal of the defeat of the French in Italy. The ministers of Louis thought they might, after the battle of Ravenna, safely dismiss a part of their army; but Maximilian, betraying all his engagements, abandoned the French to their enemies. Without consenting to make peace with Venice, he gave passage through his territory to 20,000 Swiss, who were to join the Venetian army, in order to attack the French. He, at the same time, recalled all the Germans who had enlisted under the

banner of France. Ferdinand of Aragon and Henry VIII. of England almost simultaneously attacked Louis, who, to defend himself, was obliged to recall his troops from Italy. In the beginning of June, they evacuated the Milanese; of which the Swiss took possession, in the name of Maximilian Sforza, son of Louis the Moor. On the 29th of the same month, a revolution drove the French out of Genoa; and the republic and a new doge were again proclaimed. The possessions of France were soon reduced to a few small fortresses in that Italy which the French thought they had subdued. But the Italians did not recover their liberty by the defeat of only one of their oppressors. From the yoke of France, they passed under that of the Swiss, the Spaniards, and the Germans; and the last they endured always seemed the most galling. To add to their humiliation, the victory of the Holy League enslaved the last and only republic truly free in Italy."*

The French were now fairly driven out of Italy; and the pope might congratulate himself on the manner in which he had extricated the Peninsula from the dangerous enemy which her domestic quarrels had brought upon her from abroad. He was not, however, satisfied with this true glory, nor even with the power which it had given him for spreading the dominion of the Church over the places which the nepotism of his predecessors had detached from its rule as their rapacity and oppression had alienated them from its influence. Florence was to be punished for her contumacious opposition to his will, or rather Soderini was to be removed from his office; for Julius fully knew that the obstinate resistance of the Gonfalonier had prevented the city over which he ruled from joining the league against Lewis. A ready instrument was prepared for the hands of the revengeful prelate in the watchful ambition of the Medici.

* Sismondi.

Terrified at the powerful array of her adversaries, the republic despatched ambassadors to the Spanish viceroy, who had succeeded in his master's name to the power of which Lewis and the French had been dispossessed. The viceroy required, as the only terms upon which he would consent to treat, that the Gonfalonier should be deposed; that the Medici should be restored, and with them the form of government which had existed before their banishment. Soderini had been an able and a faithful officer, but he was not made for the times which were now rapidly approaching, and in which the destinies of his country were to be fixed. On this return of his embassy he summoned the council, before which he laid the answer of the viceroy, affirming that he was willing to resign that post, which, at his country's call he had assumed, and for his country's good, when that object should seem more likely to be attained by his abdication. In this assembly it was decreed that the Medici might return to Florence, but that no change should be permitted in the government. It therefore became necessary to put the city in order for defence. Every thing was in her possession to make good her resistance but that most essential requisite at such a time, a firm and courageous resolution on the part of her executive. The viceroy, who was lying before Prato in the greatest want of provisions, was even anxious to be permitted, without disgrace, to abandon the contest. He gladly, therefore, listened to terms from the Florentine magistracy, and for a moderate consideration consented to withdraw his forces from their territories. At this moment, unwilling as they knew themselves to engage in fight, they still hesitated whether to accept the terms, which, without the doubtful result of a hostile engagement, would free them from the presence of their most formidable enemy. In this delay, the viceroy, driven to despair, resolved upon the attack of Prato, which made but a momentary show of resist-

ance to his arms. This show, however, he converted into an engagement sufficient to justify that treatment of the city, which is supposed to be permitted when a hostile army enters a fortress in the heat of a hard contested fight, with all the brutal passions strong upon the soldiery. A license to plunder was given by the legate of the pope, who, as father of a Christian church and Christian people, had undertaken to soothe the excited minds of the turbulent Florentines, and reconcile the opposing cities of a common country one to the other. Five thousand lives were wasted by permission of this sacred authority out of the small population of this inferior city of Tuscany. Nor were they the ordinary passions which generally prevail, and which, by a strange obliquity of moral vision, considered venial, are permitted to the militia of civilized countries; it was not the common feeling of revenge, nor the wanton and savage ferocity which, after the excitement of war, will glut itself in cruelties until the ordinary feelings of humanity return on the exhaustion of the unnatural and animal thirst of blood,—but the calculations of avarice and the eager thirst of gold. The poor were tortured for the wealth which they had not, and the rich for the stores which they were judged to possess. The affrighted females fled to the churches; but even these were not a sanctuary. The soldiers who fought in the name of the high-priest of their religion, stained the very altar with the violated chastity of those who had devoted their lives and their hearts to the service of its deity; and the death which was so freely dealt to their fathers and brothers and husbands, was denied to those alone who would willingly have embraced it as an escape from pollution or a refuge from the infamy of life. Contemporary historians have preserved the memory of incidents which show at least that the Roman spirit was not dead in the hearts of the women of Italy in those days, however it may have departed from the bosoms of their husbands.

The wife of a poor mechanic having fallen into the hands of a soldier or officer, after having been compelled to suffer the last violence, was carried by him into Lombardy. Her singular beauty had made upon him an impression, which the first gratification of desire could not allay, and, clothing her in male attire, he obliged her to follow him; his servant by day, and at times the slave of his passions. Arrived in Lombardy, the officer believing that he had brought his prize into a place of safety, and that the impossibility of her returning through such a distance of country would reconcile her to her condition, began to relax in the watch which he had previously kept upon her manner and actions. Availing herself of this diminished care, when all the camp lay buried in sleep the captive arose, and with a single blow revenged upon her ravisher the wrongs of herself and her husband. The tent and camp around were filled with the spoils of her countrymen; from these, selecting such as she could most easily bear, amounting in money to the sum of 500 florins, she next proceeded to equip one of the fleetest horses in the camp, and long before the morning appeared to reveal the act which she had performed, or to make known her departure, she was far upon her way to return to her country and her husband.

The news of the sack of Prato struck terror into the government at Florence. The people were not ashamed to own their fears, and, citing the fate of that unfortunate city, declared that they would not expose themselves, for the sake of the person of Soderini, to the risk of a similar slaughter. Had there been on the part of the authorities the least resolution, it would have been impossible for the very limited force of the viceroy to cause such a panic in the city, which had just before, with less preparation, withstood the attack of Charles, and contended not unsuccessfully with the strength of his army. But every one discovered the fears of those to whose care the defence of the city was given in

charge; and there was not one who did not perceive the inefficiency of the measures pursued by the administration in the performance of this duty and for the maintenance of the existing government. The disorder which marked the public councils, and which, in a contest with even the inferior forces of the viceroy, would most probably have rendered vain the defence of the city, became now its safety, but at the same time its disgrace. A band of discontented spirits had long been known to have existed in the city, whose plots to overturn the government and bring about a restoration of the Medici had not been a secret to the Gonfalonier. Under pretence of assembling for the discussion of literary and philosophical questions in the grove of a new academy, these misguided men devised the overthrow of the republic; and the most illustrious names of the age are found enrolled among those who thus entailed upon their country the curse of a heritable despotism. While it was not yet determined how far the resistance of the city might be either practicable or expedient, a band of these conspirators rushed to the palace and possessed themselves of the person of Soderini. The imbecility of the Gonfalonier at this moment cost him the high office which for ten years he had enjoyed, and involved at the same time the ruin of his country. He was compelled to resign, and to abandon the city over which he had so long presided, and whose fate was now united with his. The hatred of Julius still persecuted him even in exile, till, driven at last from Italy, he found himself compelled to seek an asylum in a city belonging to the Turks.

On the departure of Soderini, the government of which he had been the head was dissolved. The allies, by whom he had been driven from his office, having effected their purpose, now offered terms to the republic. They treated for the return of the Medici as private citizens, and once again extorted from the trea-

sury the wealth which commercial prosperity and ten years of a quiet administration had accumulated in spite of the former exactions of the friends and enemies of the city. One hundred and forty thousand ducats were demanded as the price of those services which had deprived her of a favourite officer, and more than all of the government of her choice.

Twenty citizens having been chosen to re-organize the political body, they restored the original annual office of Gonfalonier, and elected to sustain its dignities Gio. Battista Ridolfi. But the revolution was only to commence with this apparent restoration of the more republican form. Julian, the brother of Piero de' Medici, and Lorenzo, the son of that imbecile tyrant, had entered the city with the troops of the viceroy. For a moment their deportment indicated the modesty of the titles under which they had been permitted to re-enter their country. They soon, however, discovered that the state of the government was not yet permanently settled, and that if they did not lend themselves to its change, they might witness, perhaps, the last hopes of their long ambition crushed by the better fortune or greater daring of some aspirant, whom the aspect of the times might invite to complete the imperfect revolution by the assumption of sovereign power. Julian, therefore, perceived that the blow must now be struck, if the Medici were ever to recover their rule. He urged the calling of the people to parliament for the formation of a Balia; and the actual government, though it could not but understand that its overthrow was aimed at directly in this measure, was too weak to prevent its accomplishment. Forty-eight persons were invested, under the authority of the people, with all the absolute power, which, as thus delegated, might be exercised without restriction in their name. These, being all of the party of the Medici, though anxious for the restoration of power to their house, were yet too crafty by any public and open enactment to recognize

their influence or authority in the new administration. At the same time they invested the Signory with prerogatives and powers never before enjoyed in the city; granting it the right of abrogating existing laws and of creating new, with the privilege of filling its own vacancies, and renewing itself by appointment of its successors. Thus, observes the historian of Tuscany, the Florentine liberty was a second time oppressed by the incapacity and imbecility of its governors; inasmuch as they might, when they beheld the increasing power of the Spanish arms in Italy, have gained the favour of the king of Spain, or raised up a protecting influence against him by purchase of the favour of the emperor, and this at a less expense for the preservation of their liberties than they were actually compelled to sustain with its loss. A slight resistance, indeed, to the first attack of the viceroy, would likewise have saved the city from the disgrace and the ruin into which it now was about to descend, because the king of Spain had already despatched an order to his representative in Italy, forbidding him to attempt any thing in Florence for a change of government, lest the Medici should thereby recover authority and lend themselves, through the influence of the cardinal, to favour the views of the pope, his most influential and powerful rival; and who might, though now his ally, become at the first instigation of his jealous fears an inveterate enemy. All these important changes signalized the latter portion of the year 1512; after which not a parting gleam of liberty illumined the darkness which brooded over the unhappy country, illustrated by so many ages of freedom during two eras of the world's history.

CHAPTER V.

Death of Julius II., and Election of Leo X. to the Papacy.—Lorenzo de' Medici.—Character and Death of Julian de' Medici.—Government of the Cardinal Julius.—Conspiracy against his Life.—Is elected Pope, and takes the Name of Clement VII.—Battle of Pavia.—Sack of Rome.

THIS return of the Medici from their second banishment was not signalized by the cruelty which had marked their former in the time of Cosimo. Nothing, indeed, required measures so violent. The Soderini were not objects of fear, and all the rest of the city appeared even more than willing to return to its chains. The history of the times do give, indeed, an account of a conspiracy which had for its intent the restoration of the republic; but the utmost which we can extract from the evidence of those who flourished at that period, allows us only to infer that yet a few of the Florentines were desirous of vindicating the older institutions of their country; that they had made a list of those whose opinions might be supposed to coincide with their own; and that had this catalogue presented a greater number of more influential names, the desire might have ripened into a plot. Among the accused we meet the name of Macchiavelli; and though there are many who would deny him the glory of sharing in this noble enthusiasm, there is yet sufficient intrinsic evidence in his writings of a spirit that pined after the golden days of his country's honour and glory. This pretended conspiracy was discovered by the accidental dropping of a letter from the pocket of a young man named Boscoli, as he was engaged in conversation with another youth of nearly the same age of the family of the Capponi. No inducement could obtain from these resolute republicans the acknowledgment

of any thing that might tend to criminate those whose names were found in the unfortunate paper. They denied the existence of any conspiracy, while they freely acknowledged the love of liberty which they entertained in their bosoms, and which they cherished and fostered by reverting to the brighter days of their national history, when the republic was the arbitress of political fortune in Italy, and kept at bay the hostility of nations leagued for its oppression. With these sentiments the gallant youths were ordered to execution; but the government was disappointed of the information which it had hoped to obtain in regard to the extent of the opposition still existing to the return of the Medici to sovereign power. A nobler victim yet remained; the name of Macchiavelli had appeared upon the fatal list which furnished to the suspicious tyranny a catalogue of its enemies. The name of the illustrious citizen suffered, however, nothing from this trial. It was supposed impossible that a person of such authority should be engaged in a conspiracy against the government without the countenance of others more illustrious, or at least more influential, than the persons implicated in the paper which had furnished the information against himself. The question failed, however, to extort any confession from his lips; and the stern, enduring, and patient integrity of his conduct in that bitter moment of his life, have afforded a comment on the moral of his writings which the feeble malice of his enemies will not be able to combat or contest. On his liberation Macchiavelli retreated to his country residence, and there revenged his private wrongs and the misfortunes of his country in the production of a satire, from which the veil is only now beginning to be torn, and which has held up to the execration of humanity the name and character of THE PRINCE.

The death of Julian, which occurred about this period, wrought another change in the outward features of Italian politics. Their internal character was fixed

before; and resting now upon revolutions beyond their controul, the states of Italy could only vary in the manner of their servitude; they had lost the right and power of directing the government of their own concerns.

By a singular combination of circumstances of which no one can have appeared favourable to such a result, the cardinal Giovanni de' Medici was chosen successor to Julius in the papacy. Almost the whole of Italy rejoiced in this election; but Florence more especially now flattered herself that she had escaped from the dangers and expenses of a contest with the power and influence of Rome. Leo X. was the near relative of her masters, and she was not dissatisfied to receive by such a claim a brief and shameful period of tranquillity. In this long-desired quiet all Italy appeared for a moment to participate in her freedom from foreign oppression. Even the duchy of Milan had returned to her former rule, and, liberated from the arms of France, acknowledged the authority of a Sforza. The feebleness of this prince, no less in body than in mind, afforded a hope to the king of France that there might still be a possibility of recovering possession of Lombardy. A signal defeat, however, experienced by his arms, removed this fear for a short time, and Italy breathed again in the prospect of freedom from foreign intrusion.

The disturbances of Lombardy gave in the meanwhile an opportunity to the pope of reclaiming certain possessions, which he had been compelled to relinquish before to the various claims of the Germans and French. Every addition to the papal strength, of which the Florentines had formerly evinced so reasonable a suspicion and jealousy, now gave to the administration in Florence the most profound satisfaction. The Medici, who saw their inevitable advancement in his gains, were foremost in lending him their interest; and, aspiring now to a wider dominion than they had

yet enjoyed, they showed in all their deeds a manifest ambition that limited itself by nothing less than sovereign sway. Julian, however, though he certainly was not devoid of this evil of his family, accompanied it by a love of justice, a feeling and an intelligence, which reconciled the people to his rule, and earned for him the fairest fame and the noblest title of his grandfather, while the succession of political power had fallen upon Piero. But this amiable prince was already the prey to a disease, which in the thirty-eighth year of his age brought him to his grave.

This event, a cause indeed of just regret to Florence, was preceded by the invasion of Lombardy by Francis I., the gallant and adventurous successor of Lewis of France. His coming had restored the rule of the French in the North, and Leo X., as well as the Florentines who had temporized while his success was problematical, now sought to be received into his alliance, and forgot that to them had been confided the last hope of preserving the soil of Italy from the pollution of a barbarian invasion. All parties now, as well the native princes of Italy as those whom her wealth and fertility attracted from abroad, appeared to think but of their own advantages in her common disasters. The price of Leo's acquiescence in the conquest of Lombardy and the adjoining cities by the arms of France was arranged; and Florence found her compensation for the same in the countenance afforded by the conqueror to the Medici. Yet still the vanity of this family remained unsatified. Lorenzo, the son of Piero, and the inheritor of all his faults of character, longed for the outward trappings of authority incompatible with the sovereignty which he had erected at Florence. The life of Julian had placed some curb upon his grasping desires; but no sooner was that moderator removed, than, throwing off his ill-worn disguise, he laid open claim to the duchy of Urbino, which, by the assistance of Leo, he was speedily

in a condition to reduce to his rule. The taking of the principal fortress called St. Leo was the only difficulty encountered in the reduction of the place.*

The favour of Leo and Francesco had raised the fortunes of the Medici, under this second Lorenzo, beyond even that which they had attained under his magnificent grandfather; and his marriage with Magdalen of Brittany, by which he became connected with the royal family of France, appeared to put the last liberties of Florence in his hands. Returning from Paris with his wife, he could not endure she should witness the air of

* "About San Leo were posted two thousand foot, to keep it blocked up, because it was so very strong by its situation that there were no hopes of reducing it but by famine. The place, however, was three months after taken by a stratagem owing to a carpenter, who one night, by means of a very long ladder, getting upon a precipice or cliff, esteemed the most difficult of that mountain, ordered the ladder to be taken away, and remaining in that place the whole night, as soon as day appeared set about climbing by the help of some iron instruments, till he made his way at last to the top of the mountain, whence descending, and with his instruments rendering easier some of the most difficult places, he returned the next night by the same ladder to the camp. Here giving assurances that the mountain might be climbed, he returned on a night appointed by means of the same ladder to his post, and was followed by one hundred and fifty of the choicest foot; and after they had lodged during the night on the precipice, because it was impossible to climb in the dark, they began at break of day to ascend man after man by those very narrow places, and about thirty of them, with a drum and six colours, were already got to the top of the mountain, where they lay close to the ground expecting their companions who were clambering after them, when, it being now broad day, a watch of the garrison going off from their post espied those who lay prostrate on the ground, and gave the alarm. The men seeing themselves discovered, without waiting for their companions, gave the signal, as they had agreed, to those in the camp, who, according to the orders that had been given, with a multitude of ladders suddenly attacked the mountain in many places to distract the garrison, who running to their appointed posts, and being terrified at the sight of six colours within their fortifications, who were scouring the plain on top, and had already killed some of them, betook themselves to the castle which was built on the mountain. But the others who had by this time climbed up after their companions, opened the gate which gives an entrance upon the mountain, and so gave admission to those who had not as yet climbed. The mountain being thus taken, the garrison of the castle, though it was well provided with all necessaries, surrendered the second day."—*Guicciardini.*

equality assumed by the citizens whom he had represented as his subjects. Nor did he deem it necessary to disguise his displeasure. But while his countrymen were beholding with mingled hatred and terror the boldness of his advances, and were anticipating the subversion of the last republican forms which still distinguished their institutions, the hand of death, which had so often preserved the Florentines, was once again stretched forth for their protection. Within seven days of each other Lorenzo and his wife were carried to their graves. But their decease, though it occurred after little more than a year from the solemnization of their nuptials, was not early enough for the world, inasmuch as that brief period had been sufficient to give birth to a daughter, in whom the curse of the Medicean rule, extended beyond the narrow bounds to which it had heretofore been limited, devolved upon the kingdom of France, where it became so much the more pernicious as France had now to exercise a greater influence than Italy, or at least than Tuscany, on the destinies of humanity.

So far had the show of regard for the civil equality been neglected by Lorenzo, that towards the latter period of his life, in imitation of the pomp and pride of sovereignty, he refused all social intercourse with his subjects; and, shutting himself up for the greater part within his own domains, from which he issued his imperious commands, he admitted to his presence few but those who came recommended by the title of court buffoon or by the supple docility of the court satellite.

In the decease of Lorenzo the line from which he had descended became extinct, at least to Florence, and the Medicean title to authority was transferred to the family of that Julian who had fallen in the conspiracy of the Pazzi. Under the ecclesiastic who thus found himself called to exercise the power which long habit had made, as it were, hereditary in his family, Florence enjoyed a quiet and a liberty which she had

not a right to expect. The cardinal Julius appeared indeed but little solicitous of secular honours. He did not interfere to controul the elections for officers of the state in Florence; and, contented to exercise that influence which his name and the fame of his prudence assured him, he soon found himself the sole director of public affairs and the sole regulator of the public policy. Having disposed, as he imagined, the affairs of the city, he seemed anxious to be permitted to leave it, and gladly availed himself of an early opportunity for removing to Rome. His place was occupied by Silvio Passerini, cardinal of Cortona.

Meanwhile the aspect of affairs abroad had greatly changed. The preponderating influence had passed from France; and Charles of Spain and Germany united in his person and crown a claim to fear and reverence, which nothing could excite in the character or conduct of the king of France. Germany, Spain, and the Low Countries, in Europe, with all the inexhaustible treasures of the newly planted colonies of America, had given to the sceptre of Charles a power and dominion unknown to any European potentate since the time of Charlemagne. With him, therefore, Leo resolved to unite in league for the defence of Florence, the protection of the Medici, and the advancement of the holy patrimony. In this league the peasantry of Switzerland also united; and Venice and Ferara alone remained in the alliance of the French.

The result of this contest was a third expulsion of the French from Lombardy, and the re-annexation of the cities of Parma and Placenza to the Church. Pope Leo, however, had but a brief period of exultation upon this occasion. He had been for some months languishing under an habitual malady, which terminated fatally on the first of December of the year 1521, in the 46th year of his age, and in the midst of the hopes which the victories of his allies had raised to the greatest height. His friends and partizans were too pru-

dent to discuss with over-closeness the question of his death; and the suspicion which attributes it to poison administered by his attendant Malespina at the instigation of his enemies, remains to this day without any other foundation than conjecture for its support or refutation.

However the talents and merits of Leo may have been over-rated by his advocates, we cannot deny him the credit of having highly contributed to the policy by which Italy was principally governed during his life and rule. Though greatly manifest in his life, this fact was still more obvious in the changes which succeeded on his death. All the minor governments which had been absorbed during his life by the engrossing powers of the Church, and the Spanish or the French, now resumed their ancient state and re-asserted their liberties. In the deaths of Leo and the sons of Piero the line of Lorenzo became extinct; but the other branch, descending from Cosimo through Julian, still gave to Florence her ruler, and appeared in the singular craftiness of character of its representative to have fastened her bonds with greater strength than they had been riveted by the deceitful munificence of Cosimo, or the bold and skilful daring of his grandson in whom the Medicean rule had become a legitimated reign. To the advancement of the views of the cardinal Julius every thing seemed to conspire. The character of his office, which, joined to the influence of his name, would seem to open to him the most unbounded ecclesiastical dignities, might be thought at the same time to preclude the possibility of his entertaining an ambition of that secular power which his family had attained in the government of Florence. More moderate in his deportment, he impressed his contemporaries with the belief of more moderate desires than those which had urged his ancestors to the subversion of the public liberties; and the natural aversion to cruelty, which, indeed, was one saving trait in the character-

istics of his house, conciliated on various occasions the love, and at the same time the confidence, of his countrymen.

The sitting of the conclave for the choice of a successor to Leo detached him awhile from the theatre of his aspiring designs; but perceiving that his absence became the signal for new disturbances, which, though insignificant at first, might naturally be expected to increase until they should produce some important result, he suffered himself to be led with the majority of the cardinals into the election of a prelate who had taken no part in the intrigues or disputes of the college; and concurred in the election of the cardinal Adrian of Utrecht, who, retaining that name, ascended, by the unsolicited votes of the conclave, the pontifical throne. This important affair being settled, not to the dissatisfaction at least of Julius, he returned to the management of his unsettled dominion in Florence. Unstained by the enormities which tarnish the fame of Augustus in his pursuit of the imperial diadem, the cardinal Julius resembled that illustrious prince in the system adopted by him for the confirmation of his authority. Pope Leo had opened to him an avenue by which with caution to proceed to the utmost attainment of his ambitious desires. The death of Lorenzo and of Julian had rescued Florence, as observed above, from the grasp of the younger line of Cosimo, to which Leo also belonged. Immediately next to the ambition of giving a monarch to Florence from his family, was that of restoring her to liberty; and when the former was no longer practicable, he sate himself with the greatest earnestness about the accomplishment of the latter. The restoration of a popular government under the auspices of the Church, but to be free from its controul, became the subject of common discourse in the city; and all who had the reputation of patriotism or learning, were encouraged to present their views in regard to the best model of a republic. A youthful

and enthusiastic poet, whose literary pride would emulate the magnificence of the Medici, had revived in the beautiful gardens of his palace the famed academy; and the *Orti Ruccellai* were illustrated by the intercourse of spirits no less exalted than those which have for so long a succession of ages hallowed the sacred shades of Academus; there assembled all that Italy could boast of most illustrious and best; and the groves of this too brief resort of genius and virtue, listened first to the sound of those verses which have spread their author's name over Europe, and heard the words of wisdom and experience poured forth from the treasures of the mind of Macchiavelli in the *Art of War* and the *Discourses on Livy.*

The hopes excited by the intentions of Leo were greatly encouraged by the policy of Julius. Alexander de' Pazzi, belonging to that family in which hatred of the Medicean name could scarcely fail to be hereditary, addressed an oration to the cardinal in the name of the people of Florence, in which the virtue and magnanimity of his patriotism were lauded too much for the conscience of the arch politician. He could not, indeed, be prevailed upon by the author to read it; but referring him to a confidential friend, he promised to receive an abstract of its matter and manner, and to return his opinion to the writer, deduced from his friend's observations. After many days, when Alexander expected to receive the thanks of one whom he had rendered the subject of such exalted eulogy, he was told by the cardinal that the oration itself was very gratifying to his feelings, but not so the matter of which it was made to treat. This answer was sufficient to destroy the too ready hopes which his dissimulation had created; and those whom his pretences had duped now boldly exclaimed against his violated faith. But while many openly complained, there were others who more deeply meditated. Diacceto, a professor of Belles Lettres, Zanobi Buondelmonti, to whom Macchiavelli

had addressed a part of his *Discourses on Livy*, and the famous poet Alamanni with another individual of the same name, were the principal persons known to have engaged in a conspiracy against the life of the cardinal, for the purpose of wresting by force that authority which he had falsely promised to resign. The cardinal Soderini, at whose disposal had been placed a troop of French soldiers under the command of Renzo da Ceri, was connected with this plot, and was to have secured the interest of France in the accomplishment of its purpose.

Florence, however, had long been destined to slavery. All, therefore, that a few of her more resolute sons could do, was but a sacrifice to her perishing freedom; and this, like so many other vain attempts to give back to her hands the empire which she had lost with her high distinction of liberty, served but to increase the strength of those who had erected their dominion on the ruin of the common weal. Discovered by the carelessness of the messenger employed to conduct the intercourse of Diacceto with Soderini, and those of the Florentines who lived with him in banishment, the conspiracy was soon made known to all who were interested in its suppression. Diacceto was arrested and put to the torture, after which, together with one of the Alamannis, he was sentenced to death. The poet of that name, however, forewarned of the failure of their plot, effected his escape; and Buondelmonti also was permitted to pass from the city before the pursuers who were on his track were able to reach him. Followed with the most ferocious resolution by the revengeful satellites of power, in the name of ministers of the law, he owed his safety at last to the poet Ariosto, who then exercised the office of governor in Garfagnana, and had thus an opportunity of testifying that regard for the champions of Italian liberty by his acts which his penury and dependent condition would not allow him to do in his immortal verse. Suspicion

fell again on this occasion upon the author of those works which were supposed to have been chiefly instrumental in exciting the republican spirit to the desire of liberty and the punishment of its betrayer. But nothing appeared to confirm the suspicion, and the revenge of even despotic power could only satisfy itself against this uncompromising enemy by desertion and neglect; by depriving of his valuable services the country that he loved; and by exposing to the attacks of want and misery the last days of his clouded life. In the meanwhile the newly chosen pope arrived at the seat of his dominion. The splendour of the reign of Leo had accustomed the Romans to a pomp, at least in the arts and in letters, which they certainly had not known since the era of the first Cæsars. A slight retrogression might not have proved unacceptable to the subjects of a prince, the cost of whose munificence was to be defrayed from their coffers. But to reject at once all that had constituted the glory of their second rule, and made them, in the destitution of physical strength, the admiration and envy of nations; to destroy, as it were, in the transition of a single moment the boast of successive years, and to deprive them of all that still rendered their city the mistress of arts as she had been of arms—this could not be acceptable to the vain populace of Rome; and the barbarous philosophy which Adrian had learned and practised in the schools, could constitute no equivalent in their eyes for his contempt of all that they had been accustomed to value. Their very devotion was blended with the rapture of admiration as they knelt at the altars which the pencil of Raphael had filled with the bright creations of his pure and holy conceptions; and they turned with contemptuous disgust from the fanaticism which stigmatised the productions of his art as a vain or a criminal idolatry.

Over the mind of this unpopular sovereign the cardinal Soderini began to acquire an influence which

might have proved important upon the fortunes of Italy. But Julius, secure of his influence in the councils of Florence, had too much at stake in those of the ecclesiastical body to which he belonged, to suffer with security the advancement of his personal enemy and political rival. He therefore hastened to Rome, in which city his appearance created immediately a new and a powerful party. Soderini had been willing to earn the favour of Adrian by acquiescence in his opinions. Against an interest so obtained, it required very little shrewdness on the part of the cardinal Julius to obtain a popularity which should prove more than a countervailing support. His name was a guarantee for that insidious munificence which had so long deceived the people of Italy, and all classes rallied around his person as the only hope of their perishing glories. His popularity, intended at first as a check to the favour of Adrian for Soderini, soon combined with other causes to secure that favour to himself. There then remained little for him to desire, as there was little which he could not accomplish. Directing his influence from patriotism or policy to the preservation of Italian independence, he lent all the weight of his name, as the confidential adviser of the pope and as the chief of the Florentine republic, to the formation of a league in opposition to the renewed pretensions of Francis to the duchy of Lombardy. The defection of the constable Bourbon prevented the descent of the French king upon Italy at the head of his troops, more than 30,000 of which, under the command of Bonnivet, were equipped and put upon their march to bring again on Italy the distractions and the desolation of war. While these evils were preparing for the Peninsula, at Rome and Florence the plague had broken out with more than usual violence; and the general consternation was greatly increased by Adrian's rejection of all the sanitary measures proposed for the purpose of counteracting or limiting its destroying progress.

It is scarcely possible to conceive to what excess of terror and fury the subjects of this weak and obstinate prince might have been driven, had not an unexpected malady supervened, which, in the midst of his unpopularity, seized upon Adrian and hurried him to his grave. So extravagant was the joy of Rome on this occasion, that the physician whose art had failed to save the life of Adrian, was crowned by the people as a public benefactor and the saviour of his country.

Upon the occurrence of this event the cardinal Julius was called upon to assume a higher character than he had yet sustained before the eyes of his countrymen. High hopes had been entertained of his prudence, his moderation, and general ability, if at any time he should be called upon to exercise a greater influence in the affairs of Italy. After two months of discussion in conclave he was chosen as successor to the deceased pontiff, and took upon himself, in the name of Clement VII., the exercise of the highest sovereignty which any of the cities of Italy could confer. Opinions have differed as to the manner in which he corresponded, in his new dignity, to the earlier expectations to which his conduct had given birth. The judgment of Sismondi, however, will hardly admit of dispute; and as the authority of such a name may serve to dissipate in part the idle regard which ignorance or affectation associates with the mention of the Medicean rule, we give his decisive sentence in his own explicit terms. "The death of Adrian, however, saved no one. The cardinal Giulio de' Medici was chosen his successor, on the 18th of November, under the name of Clement VII. This man had passed for an able minister under his cousin Leo X., because prosperity still endured, and the pontifical treasury was not exhausted; but when he had to struggle with a distress which he, however, had not caused, his ignorance in finance and administration, his sordid avarice, his pusillanimity, his imprudence, his sudden and ill-

considered resolutions, his long indecisions, made him alike odious and contemptible. He was not strong enough to resist the tide of adversity. He found himself, without money and without soldiers, engaged in a war without an object: he was incapable of commanding, and nowhere found obedience." From the same source we copy the brief but lucid sketch of the general transactions in which the destinies of the whole Peninsula were concerned, and which put us on the way again to enter upon the more particular notice of the concerns of Florence and the Florentines. "Bonnivet entered Italy by Piedmont; passed the Ticino on the 14th of September, 1523; and marched on Milan. But Prospero Colonna, who had chosen, among the great men of antiquity, Fabius Cunctator for his model, was admirable in the art of stopping an army, of fatiguing it by slight checks, and at last forcing it to retreat without giving battle. Bonnivet, who maintained himself on the borders of Lombardy, was forced, in the month of May following, to open himself a passage to France by Ivrea and mont St. Bernard. The chevalier Bayard was killed while protecting the retreat of Bonnivet, in the rear-guard. The imperialists had been joined, the preceding year, by a deserter of high importance, the constable Bourbon, one of the first princes of the blood in France, who was accompanied by many nobles. Charles V. put him, jointly with Pescara, at the head of his army, and sent him into Provence in the month of July; but after having besieged Marseilles, he was constrained to retreat. Francis I., who had assembled a powerful army, again entered Lombardy, and made himself master of Milan: he next laid siege to Pavia, on the 28th of October. Some time was necessary for the imperialists to reassemble their army, which the campaign of Provence had disorganized. At length it approached Pavia, which had resisted through the whole winter. The king of France was pressed by all his captains to raise

the siege, and to march against the enemy; but he refused, declaring that it would be a compromise of the royal dignity, and foolishly remained within his lines. He was attacked by Pescara on the 24th of February, 1525; and, after a murderous battle, made prisoner."

In Florence, during all this time, very little of a political nature had occurred, or indeed nothing, to manifest her interest and influence in the coming contest. Every thing that transpired within her walls was now limited in its effects, and concerning in nothing the common policy of Italy, regarded merely the advancement of the Medicean authority. In the midst of the rejoicings for the elevation of her favourite, Florence was witness of a tragedy that should have served to show her the ruin into which she was hastening, while yet a possibility remained of withdrawing herself from the danger which yawned before her children. A certain Orlandini had laid a wager with another citizen against the election of the cardinal Julius to the papacy. When the news of that event arrived at Florence, desirous of deferring the payment of his wager, Orlandini declared that it was yet to be established that the pope elect had been legally chosen. How it was possible to convert this trifle into a crime against the majesty of Florence the citizens could not comprehend. They looked, therefore, with all the terror and wonder of awe on the execution of the unexpected sentence of death pronounced by the spiritless magistracy upon this unoffending victim. A violation of justice and an abuse of office like this must have excited the indignation of the people, and driven them to a vindication of the city's dignity thus violated by its magistrates, or it must have sunk them, on the other hand, still lower in the degrading slavery which had arisen upon the ruins of their immunities. The latter was in this instance the consequence. Florence looked with averted eye and palsied heart on the murder of her citizens; abandoning from that moment her

claim to that allegiance which a nation and government can only demand in return for the protection which it affords to its subjects in their public and private relations. While the vote was taking upon this question, the single act of an individual is recorded as a contrast to the willing degradation of the slaves who now governed for the Medici the fortunes of the miscalled republic. The right of secret voting gave to each of the magistrates the advantage of throwing himself on that side which the judgment of the people should subsequently approve, even though his ballot had been deposited on the other side of the question.

While all the rest of the council availed themselves of this defensive provision, Antonio Bonsi, who had all along denied the constitutionality of the proceeding, refused to vote in such a manner as to implicate himself by possibility in the charge of this infamous conspiracy against the rights of the citizens. With an open vote he proceeded to deposit his ballot, and formally recorded his vote against the conviction of Orlandini. It was not yet time for Julius to throw off the mask; though he could not have been displeased at such a manifestation of his power in the Florentine government, since he is known to have been extremely solicitous to retain it, even when exalted to a higher dignity than any which he could derive from the sovereignty of the now degraded Florentines. Proceeding, therefore, with the same profound dissimulation which had characterized all his conduct, he loudly approved of the vote which Bonsi had given without avail, and which, had it been of more avail, might have been less pleasing to him, desirous as he was of continuing the Medicean sway in Florence, although he knew that he could not long be permitted to exercise it in his proper name and person.

All who by strict hereditary right might claim the allegiance of the Florentines had perished. The line of Lorenzo was extinct, and that of Julian ended in

the cardinal, now pope Clement VII.; and the authority which had been growing in this family from the time of Giovanni, was not of such a character as to justify the distant collateral branches in claiming the rule which had lapsed by the extinction of the lineal descent. Hence the necessity for dissembling on the part of Julius, even in the midst of that despotic power which recent transactions had manifested him to possess over the lives and fortunes of his subject people. The only aspirants, to the succession, in whom Clement appeared to interest himself, were the two illegitimate children of the sons of the last Piero. This was the branch to which it was sought to transfer the usurped authority of the Medici; and the success which crowned the efforts of Clement put to silence the doubts which might have arisen as to the pretensions of his favourites to the very name in right of which they claimed the government of the city and people of Florence. Hippolito, who had, perhaps, the least disputable claims, was the acknowledged son of the magnificent Julian; but the favours of his mother had been so liberally bestowed upon other admirers as to render the paternal honours of the magnifico a matter of question. The manner of his entrance into the family of the Medici might seem sufficient in itself to raise a partial objection on the part of the Florentines to a transfer of their sovereignty from the respected house in which it had so long been vested, to the dubious offspring of a spurious and dishonoured bed. A lady of Urbino was the mother of this fortunate child. Apprehensive of the consequence of her incontinence, she entrusted her infant to the care of a servant, and ordered him to place it at the gates of one of those institutions which the frequency of such criminal indulgence in the older countries of Europe have made necessary, and in which so many unfortunates are placed to weep over the barbarity of the unnatural parents, whose caresses they have never been permit-

ted to know. The servant, aware of the intercourse which had subsisted between his mistress and the princely Julian, preferred that mode of disencumbering himself of his confidential charge which should give least burthen to his conscience, and which might by possibility become most conducive to his interests. He carried his charge, therefore, to Julian, and telling him that he had received it as his offspring, delivered it, as he pretended, to the parental charge of its father. The pride of Julian was too much gratified to question very closely the grounds from which his paternal claims had been argued by the mother of his child or by her confidant. He received the infant into his care; and such an accident converted the destined inmate of a foundling hospital into an heir of all the wealth and all the power of the Medici.

Alexander, the other object of pope Clement's care, had still greater obligations to fortune; inasmuch as the promiscuous gallantries of his mother, whose venal favours were at the disposal of all the wealthy and the dissolute, made it a matter of still greater doubt to whom the offspring of her criminal indulgences should consider himself indebted for his existence. It was, however, no ignoble boast for a courtezan to have given birth to the heir of Lorenzo de' Medici; and to him the fruit of her indiscriminate licence was charged by the provident mother. With such a stain upon the birth of his cousins, Clement found it necessary to adopt the most fraudful arts for the advancement of their interests. He did not venture to propose them as successors to himself in the authority which he had so craftily and yet so despotically exercised; but he anxiously devised the means of obtaining from the Florentines themselves a request that they should assume the governance of their city. His machinations were therefore commenced from the moment that the ambassadors of the republic arrived to congratulate him on the dignity now a second time within so short

a period conferred upon his family. With the keen apprehension of his profession, the archbishop Minerbetti understood in a moment the tendency of the observations with which the newly created pontiff descanted on the difficulties to which he left his beloved country exposed from the envy of her foreign enemies and the discord of her citizens. The spirit of his order was joined in him to all the pliancy of interested meanness to make him a proper instrument of Clement's designs, and with greater warmth and more apparent earnestness than even Clement himself had anticipated from his ready subserviency, he supplicated his holiness to interfere in behalf of the bereaved and suffering city, to render it something of the security and peace which it had enjoyed under his auspices, by substituting for his government that of some other member of his family. The designs of the pope were not, however, so readily seconded by another member of the legation. Jacopo Salviati was not prepared to sacrifice the little of liberty that remained to his country; he protested against any transfer of her supreme authority by the unauthorized decision of two ecclesiastics; and Clement finding himself thus unexpectedly thwarted by the opposition of those upon whose acquiescence at least he had calculated, was compelled to defer the full execution of his plans till occasion should occur to favour it. He despatched, therefore, the cardinal Passerini to Florence to assume the tutelage of his young relatives, and to watch the political changes which might seem to indicate the proper moment for the accomplishment of his plans.

In the meanwhile Italy was confounded by the issue of the battle of Pavia, and the march of the victorious troops of Charles, who threatened slavery to all its states. Two only alternatives appeared to present themselves in her imminent danger. One only, in fact, offered safety to the Peninsula; but Clement was not equal to the emergency, and that which seemed

to offer least of hazard, though fraught with latent danger, found most favour in his counsels. Instead of uniting the scattered and fragmentary interests which were opposed to the advance of the emperor, and would have formed a power even to make front against the imperial force, he entered into a treaty for the states of the Church and for Florence with the emperor, by which he agreed to suffer the advance of Charles in Italy upon the sole condition of that monarch's protecting the states above-mentioned, with the interests of the Medici; for which, moreover, Florence was to pay to the imperial generals the sum of 100,000 ducats. The army under the conduct of these leaders had for a long time been unpaid, and pillage was the only means by which it had been contemplated to satisfy its demands. A league among the Italians, strong enough but for a short time to resist these savage and mercenary arms, would have had the effect of disbanding them, and leaving the force of Charles in so diminished a condition as to render his escape from Italy in safety problematical. The supply, therefore, furnished by Florence became the principal means of sustaining the cause of Cæsar within the Alps; and the pusillanimity of Clement in authorizing its payment, was justly punished by all the disasters which this invasion brought at last upon his own dominions, the long inviolate city of the Church. The progress of the Germans and Spaniards, after this disgraceful treaty, became still more terrible to the eyes of the Italians. City after city yielded to their arms, and every conquest which they effected was marked by all the licensed ferocity of an assault and storm. The leaders, unable to pay the arrears of their troops, were compelled to look upon the barbarities of their soldiers without attempting to restrain their excesses; and the earliest surrender was not sufficient to disarm the fury of the squadrons which fought for plunder and the incentive of gain.

In the universal consternation Rome herself began to tremble again. She could not rest satisfied with the treaty while she felt herself destitute of the means to enforce its observance against a power whose faith was caprice, and whose right was unlimited power. She now, therefore, allowed herself to be persuaded into a league, which at the first she should have designed and controlled. But the hour of successful resistance was passed, and now she could but afford a pretext to Charles, if any indeed had been wanted, to look upon her at once as an open enemy and a faithless ally; in which two names she made herself doubly obnoxious to his displeasure, and furnished a double pretence for plunder to his savage and mercenary soldiery. The Florentines were compelled against their will to participate in this league; and the controul of its discordant elements was given to the duke of Urbino, while Giovanni de' Medici assumed the actual command. The skill of this leader, though by no means unequal to the occasion, was ill seconded by his troops; the duke of Milan, to whose succour he had been despatched, was unable to await the tardy aid, and the citadel of Milan was compelled to surrender to the generals of Charles.

In Tuscany the affairs of Clement prospered no better than those of his allies in Lombardy. Ten thousand Florentines, despatched by command of the pope to possess themselves of Siena, were beaten by a body of 400, who sallied from the city and seized the whole artillery of the papal force. All Italy was at this time in an agitation more profound than any by which her states had ever been shaken before during the ambitious struggle of the Visconti for sovereign sway in the Peninsula; through all the daring of Ladislaus, or even in the convulsions of Sforza's treachery and the French adventurer's invasion. Nor were the causes of these commotions different from those out of which her former troubles had arisen, nor were the weapons

of defence and offence with which the various combatants within her boundaries were armed, unlike the weapons of the deceitful Visconti or the bold and reckless condottieri of their times. Fraud, force, and accident, conspired now, as then, in her ruin; but the sound and vigorous constitution which had then withstood the ceaseless shocks of all its enemies, was now succeeded by the failing decrepitude of a declining age. On the side of Lombardy new difficulties engaged the pope, unfortunately master of the fortunes and destinies of Florence, at the very moment when, no longer arbiter of his own, he found himself deserted by his subjects and shut up within the castle of St. Angelo, to the narrow walls of which his empire was restricted, while his revolted subjects and his enemies pillaged the city over which he had ruled, and the temple, which the pride of many years, if not the zeal, had raised for the worship of the deity whose vicegerent he was almost acknowledged to be. The only hope of Clement was now in the moderation or policy of the emperor. He applied to him for admittance into his alliance, and thus destroyed the league which he had formed against him but just before, and which had only now begun at this moment to prosper in its affairs.

The great quarrel of the emperor had not been determined with Francis of France by the long imprisonment of the latter. Italy was to be the lists in which they yet were destined to try the fortunes of their arms; and the moment of her greatest calamity was at hand. Bourbon, the leader of the forces of the Spanish prince, had cast away all those regards which make the soldier's name a pledge of honour, and nothing but the authority of the crown under which he fought, could rescue him from the opprobrium of a leader of a band of freebooters. Having devastated Lombardy, and made the streets of the populous city of Milan a pasture for the cattle that strayed through its deserted ways, he prepared to sweep with the same remorse-

less fury over the more fruitful plains, and through the still more opulent cities, of the centre and the South. His troop had been just reinforced by hordes of German barbarians, who, in hope of a plentiful and certain booty, and mingling the name of religion, (equally abused by them, and by those against whom they at the same time denounced its just revenge) had passed the Alps for the destruction of Italy. The last hope of this unhappy country was now placed upon Giovanni de' Medici. He had not the means of attacking with any prospect of success the powerful army of the constable Bourbon; but, harassing him in continual skirmishes, he had for a long time retarded his march, and had succeeded, as it was hoped that he would still succeed, in wearing out the patience of the troops, which began already to be dissatisfied with a country that offered them no longer incentives to plunder, and which longed for the pillage of the richer countries whose boundaries were defended by Giovanni de' Medici. An accidental shot took off this bulwark and hope of the Italians; he received a wound in the knee which required the amputation of the limb, and being carried to Mantua for surgical treatment, such as the age and occasion afforded, he there expired in the twenty-eighth year of his age, with a reputation scarcely equalled by the greatest captains of his time, and only by that of the Italian Pescara and the unprincipled traitor of France, the constable Bourbon. This Giovanni was the son of another of the same name who had married the widow of the cardinal Riario, the famous Caterina Sforza. He belonged collaterally to the family of Clement, Lorenzo, and Cosimo; by descent from that Lorenzo whom we have already seen as the son of Giovanni the father of Cosimo, and the founder of the fatal rule of his family. His whole life had been a series of adventures and misadventures. Banished at the age of three years by duke Valentine, he owed his life to the care of his mother. She had clothed

him in female attire, and concealed him in the convent of Aunalena; but, like the young Thessalian's, when the spirit that panted for battle and arms revealed itself from under the disguise, the warlike character of the youth displayed itself while still he wore the vestments which indicated and required the grace and softness of the gentler sex. Discovering his disposition for arms, Salviati had assumed the care of his education, and Florence for a while was witness of his indomtable courage, till the prudent Soderini, mindful, perhaps, of his claims to the supremacy so long enjoyed in the city by his family, had deemed it expedient to avail himself of one of the frequent quarrels in which Giovanni was continually engaged to banish him from the city. His next appearance was at the court of Rome; and here his active and aspiring character recommended him to employment. In the invasion of the armies of Charles, he was placed, as we have seen, at the head of the forces collected to oppose the progress of the invaders; and while he lived it had not been possible for them to pass the frontiers which had been given into his charge for protection. Many instances are recorded of his valour and of his sagacity; and it is not impossible that, had he been permitted a longer life, he might not only have prevented the sack of Rome, but have given also to Florence a nobler line of princes than her fortune and misconduct were destined soon afterwards to bring on her. As instances of his daring it is related, that twice, in all his armour, he undertook for some important purpose to swim across the Po, and, thus equipped, succeeded in stemming the impetuosity of its rapid current; and that on another occasion, when his troops hung back in terror before the forces of the Spaniards drawn up in order on the opposite side of the Adda, he pushed his charger into the stream in face of either army, and while his own soldiers were slowly transported across the current in boats, arrived uninjured at the other side.

His death, however serious a loss it might appear to the papal service, was scarcely regretted by the pope, whose fears for the success of his scheme in favour of the bastard children of Lorenzo and Julian, were more keenly excited by the bold aspiring character of this more distant sharer of his name and blood, than by the appalling dangers which threatened his countrymen and the people placed under his governance by the advance of the imperial marauders.

From this time there remained no bar in the way of the immediate march of the Germans. At Florence little confidence had been inspired by the conduct of its chief. The vacillating policy of the pope had rendered it manifest to the citizens that his government had not the energy required for their defence; but at the same time a revolutionary movement at such a moment might have cost them even more than submission to his inefficient direction. Among the younger portion, however, of the population a general sentiment prevailed in favour of more vigorous measures; to be pursued at once against the domestic oppression and the threatening forces of the invading enemy. They demanded their instant liberation from the disgraceful thraldom of the government, under which they had fallen, and "constrained the magistrates," as is observed by the great contemporary historian, "to proclaim, by solemn decree, Ippolito and Alessandro, the pope's nephews, rebels, with a design to introduce anew the popular government. But, in the meantime, there entered Florence the duke and the marquis, with many officers, and with the cardinal of Cortona, and Ippolito de' Medici, and they put in arms fifteen hundred foot, who had been kept several days in the city out of suspicion: with these drawn up in order they marched all in a body together towards the square, which being immediately abandoned by the multitude, they took possession of it; but being pelted with stones, and fired at with harquebusses by those

in the townhouse, none durst stay in the open square, but posted themselves in the circumjacent streets."*

It is impossible to decide upon what might have been the result of this contest had it been prolonged, or had it been abandoned for decision to the judgment of arms. Guicciardini, who, in his history is but the narrator of all that he beheld and much that he himself performed, relates, that though he succeeded in restoring harmony to the parties, yet that he was afterwards censured upon either side, as both pretended that his interference alone was that which wrested from their grasp a certain victory. His authority at this moment exercised in the city was derived from the office of lieutenant of the pontifical forces, which he held with the most unlimited controul in the name of the pontiff himself. The importance of this disturbance, so apparently without any certain result, was felt in all the after sufferings of Italy. "Though quieted the same day and without blood," continues the same author, who had unhappily an opportunity of witnessing not only the great transactions of those years, but the secret springs which put them in motion, "this commotion was the origin of very grievous disorders; and perhaps it may be said that, had it not been for this event, the ruin, that very speedily followed, would not have happened. For the duke of Urbino, and the marquis of Saluzzo, on occasion of this tumult, stayed in Florence, and went not to view the camp of Ancisa, according to appointment: and the next day Luigi Pisano, and Marco Foscaro, the Venetian ambassador residing at Florence, observing the inconstancy of the city, protested that they would not consent that the army should pass Florence before the conclusion of the confederacy under debate, in which they demanded a contribution of ten thousand foot, thinking it a favourable opportunity to make this advantage of the necessity of the Florentines. But at

* Guicciardini.

last the treaty was concluded the 28th day, referring the contribution to the decision of the pontiff, who was by this time re-united to the confederates. Besides, the time being come for the payment of the Swiss, and Luigi Pisano, according to the bad provision made by the Venetians, having no money to satisfy them, some days passed before it could be procured, so that the salutary counsel of marching with the army to encamp at Ancisa did not take effect."

While the armies of the emperor were engaged in ravaging the northern states, it had seemed sufficient to Clement to protect the limits of the Tuscan cities by all the arts which his narrow views considered as prudent, and by such force as his failing courage allowed him to unite in their defence. No sooner, however, had the dreaded squadron transgressed the barriers which the feeble policy of the pope had interposed for the protection of Tuscany, than his cares for that district were absorbed in the nearer interests of the immediate possessions of the Church. He would now gladly have seen the havoc in Florence which had depopulated the flourishing city of Milan, but the wants of the army of Bourbon would not admit of this delay, and the general of the league, on whom the hopes of Rome were fixed, had little cause to feel for the sufferings or dangers of Florence. A combination of circumstances had called to this high office that duke of Urbino, whom the ambition of the last Lorenzo de' Medici and the injustice of Leo had expelled from his throne and dominions.

As, therefore, every diligence had not been used, perhaps in consequence of many concurring causes, to keep the enemy from entering Tuscany, it now became difficult to prevent his extending the line of conquests towards the states of the Church, and the alluring conquest of their opulent capital. With the knowledge of the twofold danger that attended the slightest delay, Bourbon pushed therefore on the way

to Rome, the prospect of whose riches about to be submitted to their greedy desires, kept his long unpaid and clamorous followers in a precarious subjection.

The coming of this formidable army was doubly announced to the destined and devoted city. Troops of flying countrymen and the inhabitants of the pillaged towns came horror-stricken, to implore within her walls a shelter from the exterminating fury of the troops who preceded the march of the constable. While the minds of the people were excited to the highest pitch of fearful expectation by the real and exaggerated dangers impending over them, they were summoned to hear the denunciations of vengeance on their devoted city by a singular being, who, with all the madness of enthusiasm and all the earnestness of truth, poured out the curses of heaven on a guilty and long offending race. It was in vain that the authority of the pope was exercised to check the predictions of the prophet of ill. He only cried out the louder against the sins of the times, and named the pope himself as the special object of the divine malediction. Stripes and scourging were of no avail against one, who, in the frenzy of his own ravings, which began to assume in the eyes of the vulgar an appearance of divine revelation, accompanied his denunciations with the most appalling wounds inflicted on himself; and, smiting his bosom with a stone, which drew forth torrents of blood, he in the same moment announced and wept over the desolation of the eternal city. Nor were his predictions vain. The army of the Germans and Spaniards arrived on the 5th of May " before the capital of Christendom. Clement, long alarmed at his march, had, on the 15th of March, signed a truce of eight months with the viceroy of Naples, and dismissed his troops, never imagining that one of the emperor's lieutenants would not respect the engagements of the other. On the approach of Bourbon, however, the walls of Rome were again mounted with the engines of war. The

next day, the 6th of May, this renegade prince led his troops to the assault of the city. He was killed near the Janiculum, while mounting the first scaling-ladder. His fall did not stop the terrific band of robbers which he led. The victorious army scaled the walls, which were ill defended; and spread terror through the quarters of the Borgo, Vatican, and Trastevere. In a few hours they were masters of the whole city, Clement having neglected to destroy the bridges on the Tiber.

"The capital of Christendom was then abandoned to a pillage unparalleled in the most calamitous period—that of the first triumph of barbarism over civilization: neither Alaric the Goth, nor Genseric the Vandal, had treated it with like ferocity. Not only was all that could be seized in every house and every shop carried off, but the peasants of the fiefs of Colonna took possession of the heavy furniture which did not tempt the cupidity of the soldier. From the day on which these barbarians entered the city, all personal protection was withdrawn; women were abandoned to the outrages of the victors; and sanctuaries, enriched by the veneration of Christendom for twelve centuries, were devoted to spoliation. The squares before the churches were strewed with the ornaments of the altar, relics, and other sacred things, which the soldiers threw into the street after having torn off the gold and silver which adorned them. Men, women, and children were seized, whenever their captors could flatter themselves that they had concealed some treasure, or that there was any one sufficiently interested for them to pay their ransom. Every house resounded with the cries and lamentations of wretched persons thus subjected to the torture; and this dreadful state of crime and agony lasted not merely days, but was prolonged for more than nine months: it was not till the 17th of February, 1528, that the prince of Orange, one of the French lords who had accompanied Bourbon in his rebellion, finally withdrew from Rome all of this

army that vice and disease had spared. The Germans, indeed, after the first few days, had sheathed their swords, to plunge into drunkenness and the most brutal debauchery; but the Spaniards, up to the last hour of their stay in Rome, indefatigable in their cold-blooded cruelty, continued to invent fresh torture to extort new ransoms from all who fell into their hands; even the plague, the consequence of so much suffering, moral and physical, which broke out amidst all these horrors, did not make the rapacious Spaniard loose his prey."*

On the taking of the city, or rather, on the approach of the enemy, Clement had betaken himself to his only fastness, the castle of St. Angelo, in which he had hoped to shelter himself till the army of the confederates should arrive for his rescue. The duke of Urbino, however, had it now in his power to revenge upon Rome and the Medici the injuries received at their hands. He delayed, therefore, so long the march of the confederates, that the miserable prisoner, apprehensive of falling into the hands of his enemies without the security of a capitulation, was compelled, for the preservation of his person, to accept the terms which might be offered him; and the price of his safety, to be paid from the coffers of his ruined subjects, drained the people of the little that the sack of their city had left them yet to enjoy. In addition to immense amounts of money extorted in this manner from the humbled pontiff, the exactions of the conquerors demanded the cession for a period of the castle, which had so long proved his asylum and security, of Civita Vecchia, Ostia, Civita Castellana, and that of Parma and Placenza, as a lasting possession. While thus despoiled by his implacable enemy, Clement was treated with but little more generosity by those who had been his friends. The Venetians availed themselves of this reverse in his fortunes to occupy the city

* Sismondi.

of Ravenna, and many other places were torn on this occasion from the rule of the Church. Sigismund Malatesta recovered possession of his old inheritance, the city of Rimini, and the duke of Ferrara seized again the government of Modena. Such were the transactions of the year, whose entrance was announced by the historian Guicciardini as "full of most atrocious, and for several ages unheard of events; as, changes of states, captivity of princes, sackings of cities in a most shocking manner, a great scarcity of provisions, and a raging pestilence spreading itself in a manner over all Italy, where nothing was to be seen but death, flight, and rapine."

CHAPTER VI.

Revolution and Fall of the Medici at Florence.—Nicolo Capponi, Gonfalonier.—State of Parties.—Florence put by Vote under the Protection of the Saviour.—Capponi deposed, and Carducci elected in his Place.—League of Francis and Charles destructive to the Liberties of Florence.—War of Florence for the Defence of her Freedom.—Alexander de' Medici declared Lord of Florence by the Emperor.—Death of Clement VII.

The progress of the imperialists in Italy produced a powerful effect on the influence of the pope at Florence; "for as soon as the news arrived there of the loss of Rome, the cardinal of Cortona, terrified to find himself abandoned by the citizens, who made profession of being friends of the Medici, having no way to make provision of money but by violent and extraordinary means, resolved to give way to fortune; and, calling an assembly of the citizens, he put them in full and free possession of the administration of the republic, on obtaining certain privileges and exemptions, with leave for the pontiff's nephews to stay in Flo-

rence as private citizens, and a general amnesty for all past offences against the state. These things being settled on the sixteenth of May, the cardinals, with the pontiff's nephews, departed for Lucca, where, soon repenting of the resolution that he had taken with so much timorousness, he tried whether he could retain the citadels of Pisa and Livorno, which were in the hands of governors that were trusty friends to the pontiff, who, however, within a very few days, despairing of relief on account of the pope's captivity, and receiving also a certain sum of money, resigned those fortresses to the Florentines. The city being reduced to a popular government, the Florentines created Gonfalonier of justice for one year, and with a power to be confirmed for three years, Nicolo Capponi, a citizen of great authority, and a lover of liberty."*

Many reasons combined to make the election of Capponi desirable; and, had the same wisdom directed the Florentines in yielding to his measures as that which governed them in the choice of this magistrate, they would have had little cause to regret their election. His principal rival for the office to which he had been elected by the wishes of all the moderate friends of liberty, had been a certain Baldassar Castrucci, to whose ferocity of character the name of public liberty and rights afforded a pretext for continual excitement to blood. By the insinuations of this disappointed candidate, a party was raised against the Gonfalonier for that moderation which the precarious state of the times demanded even in the treatment of political opponents; and all the warmth of party was revived both for and against him. The adherents on whom he could most safely rely were those who had adopted the peculiar notions of the old partizans of Savonarola. These notions, now revived, became a means of powerfully acting on the citizens by the in-

* Guicciardini.

termingling of religious fanaticism with political ardour; and Capponi, who had himself imbibed in a great degree the doctrines of that party, was able to avail himself of them now for the establishment of his still wavering authority. In this condition of the public mind he had recourse to an expedient unequalled for its singularity in the annals of any Christian people, and which is the more wonderful, inasmuch as the doctrines of the Reformation had already greatly illuminated the minds of men, and as the general refinement and intellectual improvement of the Florentines were at this period characteristic of that people, among all the most enlightened of the age. He proposed that the city should be placed under the more immediate care of the Supreme Being; and, in order that no earthly prince might claim dominion over its population, who had so long maintained the dignity of the republican name, he nominated for election to their highest sovereignty, with the name of King of Florence, "the Saviour of Man, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity." Excited as were the minds of many in the public council, who had been elevated to the Signory by the votes and influence of the revived party of the Dominicans, they were not prepared for so strange a proposal. Capponi insisted, however, on having his nomination submitted to the vote of the house, and the voice of a large majority sustained the proposal. The following inscription was ordered to be placed upon a conspicuous part of the public buildings, as a full investiture of the elected with the sovereignty which had been conferred on him ΤΗΣ *Christo Regi suo Domino dominantium, Deo summo optimo Max. Liberatori, Mariæque Virgini Reginæ dicavit. Anno S MDXXVII.* Notwithstanding this innovation in the name of the government, its actual officers remained the same, and the Gonfalonier still exercised the chief executive power as before. Whatever effect this singular proceeding may have

had, was confined rather to the moral than to the political condition of the citizens. A number of regulations were introduced in accordance with the moral lessons of the gospel, such as it was urged could not but correspond to the will of the Celestial Prince. All gaming was denounced, and the ordinances for the regulation of the manners of the citizens were drawn with strict regard to the obligations of Christian morality. The voice of public opinion was concentrated into law, and that which had formerly been committed to the government and modifying influence of the former, as private habits and opinions, was now submitted to the judgment of the public tribunals for the protection and enforcement of the latter.

Capponi had attained the high dignity which he now enjoyed for the most part by favour of the populace; but he had known too much of his country's history in her later years, to trust implicitly the favour of a people whose opinions were swayed no longer by an understanding love of liberty, but by the vanity of its name; and who yielded to caprice the influence and power of principle. He directed, therefore, his care to the conciliating of those higher bodies in the state which had served before to sustain the Medici, since the death of the first Lorenzo; and all who had been adherents of that family were zealously courted by the Gonfalonier. In proportion, however, as he succeeded in gaining the favour of this party, he detached from his interest the most uncompromising of those by whose influence he had been exalted to office. In this condition of affairs the city saw revived the party distinctions of the period of Savonarola, and the names of *Adirati* and *Arrabbiati* again denoted the passions by which the parties were actuated in their hostility.

At the head of the faction which Capponi had thus injudiciously abandoned, his former rival, Carduccio, placed himself. His character had rendered him an object of dread for a long time to all those who wit-

nessed his pretensions to office, and who had any thing to fear from the supervention of a popular licence for a democratic government. On the other hand, in proportion as he was to these an object of terror, he became each day a greater favourite with his party; to whom, perhaps, his common epithet of Messer Scimitarra, denoting the reckless boldness of his manner, was a recommendation.

As advocates of the popular privileges, or rather, perhaps, as the people themselves, the Dominicans were naturally supporters of the faction opposed to the Gonfalonier; to gain these powerful auxiliaries it was, therefore, that Capponi introduced the remarkable measure related above, and which for a time succeeded in attracting to him the fervent and enthusiastic sympathy of these extravagant partizans. It is worthy of note, that when the voice of the council was taken upon this strange proposition, twenty persons were found to have voted in the negative.

During the time that these events were passing in Florence, that city, as well as all the rest of Italy, was suffering under the severest inflictions of providence in the combined devastations of famine and the plague. From the month of May 40,000 persons are said to have perished before the beginning of the November following. Amid all the desolation caused by such a pestilence, the unhappy Italians had still some consolation under its exterminating ravages. At Rome it had raged with unexampled violence, and the army of the imperialists, by which that city had been so ruthlessly pillaged, now day by day diminished by its fury, began to present to the victims of its lust and avarice a spectacle of suffering that might seem to lighten their own sorrows, and to offer atonement for the injuries sustained at the hands of the imperial generals and their remorseless bands. To the awful ravages of the pestilence, moreover, the Peninsula was in a great measure indebted for the departure of the barbarians,

whose rapacity had rendered her fertility of no avail to her children, and converted the blessing of her luxuriant climate into a curse. "The struggle between the Italians, feebly seconded by the French and the generals of Charles, had been prolonged more than two years after the sack of Rome; but it only added to the desolation of Italy, and destroyed alike in all the Italian provinces the last remains of prosperity. On the 18th of August, 1527, Henry VIII. of England and Francis I. contracted the treaty of Amiens, for the deliverance, as the two sovereigns announced, of the pope. A powerful French army, commanded by Lautrec, entered Italy in the same month, by the province of Alexandria. They surprised Pavia on the 1st of October, and during eight days barbarously pillaged that great city, under pretence of avenging the defeat of their king under its walls. After this success, Lautrec, instead of completing the conquest of Lombardy, directed his march towards the South; renewed the alliance of France with the duke of Ferrara, to whose son was given in marriage a daughter of Louis XII., sister of the queen of France. He secured the friendship of the Florentine republic, which, on the 17th of the preceding May, had taken advantage of the distress and captivity of the pope, to recover its liberty, and to re-establish its government in the same form in which it stood in 1512. The pope, learning that Lautrec had arrived at Orvieto, escaped from the castle of St. Angelo on the 9th of December, and took refuge in the French camp. The Spaniard Alarcon had detained him captive, with thirteen cardinals, during six months, in that fortress; and though the plague had broken out there, he did not relax in his severity. After having received 400,000 ducats for his ransom, instead of releasing him, as he had engaged to do the next day, it is probable that he suffered him to escape, lest his own soldiers should arrest him in order to ex-

tort a second ransom."* It was not, however, till the year 1529 that a regular treaty of peace between the pope and the enemy from whom he had endured so much, gave quiet to the worn-out subjects of the ecclesiastical sovereignty.† That year had not yet ar-

* Sismondi.

† "Peace was ardently desired on all sides; negotiations were actively carried on; but every potentate sought to deceive his ally, in order to obtain better conditions from his adversary. Margaret of Austria, the sister of the emperor's father, and Louisa of Savoy, the mother of the king of France, met at Cambray; and in conference, to which no witnesses were admitted, arranged what was called '*Le traité des dames*.' Clement VII. had at the same time a nuncio at Barcelona, who negotiated with the emperor. The latter was impatient to arrange the affairs of Italy, in order to pass into Germany. Not only had Soliman invaded Austria, and, on the 13th of September, arrived under the walls of Vienna, but the reformation of Luther excited in all the north of Germany a continually increasing ferment. On the 20th of June, 1529, Charles signed at Barcelona a treaty of perpetual alliance with the pope: by it he engaged to sacrifice the republic of Florence to the pope's vengeance, and to place in the service of Clement, in order to accomplish it, all the brigands who had previously devastated Italy. Florence was to be given in sovereignty to the bastard Alexander de' Medici, who was to marry an illegitimate daughter of Charles V. On the 5th of August following, Louis and Margaret signed the treaty of Cambray, by which France abandoned, without reserve, all its Italian allies to the caprices of Charles; who, on his side, renounced Burgundy, and restored to Francis his two sons, who had been retained as hostages. Charles arrived at Genoa, on board the fleet of Andrea Doria, on the 12th of August. The pope awaited him at Bologna, into which he made his entry on the 5th of November. He summoned thither all the princes of Italy, or their deputies, and treated them with more moderation than might have been expected after the shameful abandonment of them by France. As he knew the health of Francesco Sforza, duke of Milan, to be in a declining state, which promised but few years of life, he granted him the restitution of his duchy for the sum of 900,000 ducats, which Sforza was to pay at different terms: they had not all fallen due when that prince died, on the 24th of October, 1535, without issue, and his estates escheated to the emperor. On the 23d of December, 1529, Charles granted peace to the Venetians; who restored him only some places in Apulia, and gave up Ravenna and Cervia to the pope. On the 20th of March, Alphonso d'Este also signed a treaty, by which he referred his differences with the pope to the arbitration of the emperor. Charles did not pronounce on them till the following year. He conferred on Alphonso the possession of Modena, Reggio, and Rubbiera, as fiefs of the Empire; and he made the pope give him the investiture of Ferrara. On the 15th of March, 1530, a diploma of the emperor raised the mar-

rived, at the point which we have reached, and the domestic disturbances of Florence occurred in the midst of the foreign wars which her sister states of Italy were still waging against the freebooters whom the emperor acknowledged for his soldiers.

It will have been observed that Florence, in all the conflicts arising out of the invasion of the Spaniards and Germans, had acted, when suffered to determine for herself, with a single view to the conservation of her state; and that so far only as that object was concerned, did she willingly participate in the struggles between Francis and Charles. The rapid strides of the latter towards universal dominion in Italy, and the dreadful abuse of his victories, however, threw her naturally by degrees into the arms of France; and a seeming neutrality only prevented the imperialists from directing against her the forces which they still possessed within the Alps. The change of policy which succeeded the liberation of Clement, rendered a league with that power to which she had before inclined inevitable, and made the success of her ally the last anchor of her hope.

If for a period the views of the sovereign pontiff had lain concealed in the discordant interests that had during the time of his rule distracted Italy, he could not at last prevent the jealousy of the Florentines from discovering that his ultimate and dearest object was the restoration of the bastard line of his house to the supre-

quisate of Mantua to a duchy, in favour of Frederick de Gonzaga. The duke of Savoy and the marquis de Montferrat, till then protected by France, arrived at Bologna, to place themselves under the protection of the emperor. The duke of Urbino was recommended to him by the Venetians, and obtained some promises of favour. The republics of Genoa, Sienna, and Lucca, had permission to vegetate under the imperial protection; and Charles, having received from the pope, at Bologna, on the 22d of February and 24th of March, the two crowns of Lombardy and of the Empire, departed in the beginning of April for Germany, in order to escape witnessing the odious service, in which he consented that his troops should be employed against Florence."—*Sismondi.*

macy from which they had been so justly expelled. They perceived that he was now lending himself to the interests of Charles, and that the ability of that ambitious prince's rival to maintain the contest, was their only dependence against the fulfilment of any treaty which might be made for the barter of their liberties between the head of the Church and his so recent adversary. From this moment Florence became the open ally of the French; and when the treaty of June, 1529, united in the same manner the pope and the emperor, the former was at liberty to prosecute his designs against the freedom of his countrymen, and the latter was heedless of all excuse for the aid which he might be called upon to contribute for the unholy purpose.

In the meanwhile the management of the domestic affairs of the city augured ill for the safety of its citizens in case of danger from without. Party excitement was at its height; but unfortunately, Capponi, the only one whose motives seem to have been purely disinterested, had from a mistaken moderation embraced the side which was certainly not most favourable to the maintenance of the people's immunities, while those who adopted that more righteous cause, have hardly left behind them the testimonials of an honest zeal in the interest which they so warmly maintained. To these causes, and to the losses of the French in their subsequent campaigns, must be attributed the early loss of all that the democracy of the country had so strenuously urged and sacrificed so much to preserve. Suspicious of the intentions of Capponi, the impatient youth of Florence had formed themselves into a band for the protection, as they averred, of the palace of the Signory, which had always been the great object of attack in all the violent revolutions of the state; such as they pretended might now be at any moment anticipated from the public enemy, or the more treacherous aristocracy within. Capponi was not

deceived by these declarations. He knew that the eyes of this impetuous band were far more upon him than on the palace; and that against his authority, if not against his life, their arms would be eagerly raised on any tumult which should be excited in the name of public liberty. To obviate the dangers which surrounded him, the Gonfalonier proposed, as a more efficacious and republican measure, that all the people should be armed; a measure formerly proposed by his enemies and strongly resisted by him. The former advocates of the general arming now loudly exclaimed that Capponi entertained a treacherous design against the commonwealth in this unexpected proposal, and cried out in opposition to its adoption. The influence of the Gonfalonier, however, carried it in the council; but the result was very different from that which he had desired, although at first it appeared to be a support and defence to his administration. A certain Jacopo Alamanni, long distinguished for the impetuosity of his character, and violent in his support of all that he believed essential to the advancement of the democratic interest, had obtained the guard of the palace on that day on which the obnoxious measure was to be decided within its walls. In the foolish pride of his triumph, the son of Capponi, on leaving the door of the council before which Alamanni was stationed, had exclaimed in such a manner as to be overheard by the fiery republican, that having carried their point they would now be liberated from the *children by which they had been so long surrounded.* Alamanni knew that the contemptuous words were spoken for him to hear, and with the usual impetuosity of his disposition he answered in such a manner as to cause a quarrel and a sudden resort to arms. In the heat of the disturbance Alamanni drew a poiniard, with which he attempted to rush upon one of the friends of the youth who had so imprudently excited the tumult.

Alamanni was, of all the party opposed to Capponi,

the most valued and valuable to the rival of that functionary; and the fiery disposition which had often before involved him in the most dangerous feuds, and placed him in opposition to the government, rendered him of infinite service in the measures projected by his patron for the subversion of the Gonfalonier's administration. The influence of this party-leader was not, however, sufficient to protect him on this occasion; nor, though with all the weight of his authority he had advocated the adoption of the mildest punishment for the culprit, yet when the vote was taken on the question of his death, and all the council declared themselves in favour of capital punishment, did the aged disorganizer venture, even under the protection of a secret vote, to deposit his ballot in favour of any mitigation of the severity of the sentence. One only individual was found to have inclined to the side of mercy, and many reasons concurred to make it more than probable that that one was Capponi himself, against whom the enmity of the prisoner had been particularly directed. The head of Alamanni was on the same day offered as a spectacle to the people, who thus were taught to appreciate the energy of the government, its impartiality, and power. In its foreign relations it had not the same discretion. Every action of the pope's was calculated to excite the suspicion of Florence, yet Capponi was unwilling to fear. He trusted rather to the effect and virtue of treaties than to the power of arms; and while the Florentine youth with incredible alacrity prepared for the defence of the government of their choice, Capponi was treating with the deceitful pontiff who had marked his city for a hopeless and degrading slavery. We have already hinted at the doubts which clouded the births of the two favourites of Clement, in whom the whole influence and all the claims of the Medici were made, by the address of their kinsman and patron, to centre. To what we have already observed we should have added, that there were

many who attributed to a still higher source than the son of Piero, the birth of the illegitimate Alexander, and who did not hesitate to find a deeper reason than that which was made to appear, for the affection and favour of Clement lavished on an individual so dissolute and weak. To these suspicions the complaints of his other favourite contributed in no inconsiderable degree, when, having received a cardinal's hat as a mark of esteem or affection from his protector, he learned that the more fortunate Alexander was to receive the papal support for the sovereignty of Florence.

The state of parties in Florence was at this moment liable to momentous change, in accordance with the developement of the views which Rome was suspected of entertaining against her government; and the elevation of Hippolito to the cardinalate, by strengthening the suspicion of the party opposed to the Medici, effected a great diminution of the influence and popularity of the Gonfalonier. Exhausted by the violent and increasing opposition, he began to look upon the office which had been conferred upon him by his fellow-citizens, as a dignity too dearly purchased, with the loss of that favour which had procured him the election, and with the odium which his unshaken love of justice and his country daily brought on him by misrepresentation of his enemies. At the same time he knew that the safety of the city's liberties depended upon the pursuance of that policy with which he had governed it, and he consented to bear for a while the weight of the oppressive honours of the magistracy, until he discovered that even his continuance in the exercise of its functions would not long be able to sustain the principles which he knew to be essential to the preservation of the popular rule. He then despaired of his country for the first time, and regretted the part which he had borne in the expulsion of the Medici, foreseeing their certain and speedy return to the city with power which had never yet been exer-

cised by any individual within its walls. He would then with pleasure have lain down the ensigns of office, and, hopeless and reckless, have abandoned to their impending fate the misled citizens whom he could no longer serve. The tender which he made to this effect in the council was strenuously opposed by the Signoria, and he was compelled to retain the office in which he felt himself to be of little service to the state, and a mark but for the envy and hatred of his enemies.

In the meanwhile it was resolved by all parties to prepare for the defence of the city. Michael Angelo was selected to prepare the fortifications, and Malatesta Baglioni was put at the head of the troops.

Capponi had now passed through the latter part of the second term for which he had been elected, and although the number of his enemies had greatly increased, it was yet conceded that he would be returned for a third. An accident alone prevented the fulfilment of this general expectation, and in deciding the fate of the Gonfalonier, precipitated the ruin of the commonwealth. A firm and undeviating friend of civil liberty, he had neglected nothing that might seem to secure its maintenance; and for this purpose he had always assumed towards the party of the Medici a demeanour that should take from them all pretext for rebellion, and reduce them to a common will with their fellow-citizens. With the same motive he had endeavoured to conciliate the angry feelings of the pope, and to win him, if possible, from the expectation, if not from the desire, of disturbing the existing order of the Florentine government for the sake of his relatives and wards. Frequent communications are known to have passed between them, and letters were sometimes written which might indeed convey to the populace, who could not enter into the particulars of the Gonfalonier's policy, the possible suspicion of a want of faith. One of these letters fell at last into possession of the opposi-

tion, having been suffered by the Gonfalonier to fall unobserved from his hands. The last election of a Signoria had placed in office two individuals of very different characters, both inimical and dangerous to the administration of which they thus constituted a part. Jacopo Gherardi, the most noisy of all the prominent leaders of the popular party, became an easy and useful instrument in the hands of those who expected to rise in the overthrow of Capponi's administration. He was clamorous, daring, and insolent; but nothing appears against him to blacken his name with any fouler charge. Francesco Valori was, however, a more dangerous enemy, not merely to the person of the Gonfalonier, but to the principles which his whole authority had been bent to sustain. With the most unblushing effrontery he claimed to belong to that party which styled itself the democratic, and which had, as a test and a common bond, the hatred of the Medici, and, by consequence, of the pope. Yet at the very moment in which his party were denouncing the ambition of the crafty, and at the same time violent, prelate, he was engaged with him in a treaty of a private nature, as he averred, but which ought to have rendered him infinitely more an object of suspicion to the jealous Florentines, than the honest and uncompromising Capponi. Into the hands of the former of these the letter from Rome unfortunately fell, and a private council of all who were most earnest in favour of a revolutionary movement was invited to attend, and to suggest such measures as the occasion might seem to present for the ruin of the Gonfalonier.

It was determined in this secret conference to cause, during the night, a number of copies to be distributed among the most violent of the people, and to demand the trial of the Gonfalonier as a secret agent of the pope for the restoration of the Medici. The plot was but too successful. On the morning Capponi found himself besieged in his palace, not only by the secret

enemies of his person, but by the real friends of the country, persuaded that its liberties had been bartered by their magistrate. Nor was it sufficient for them to demand his deposition, but with the most pressing instances they called for his life. With the utmost difficulty his colleagues in the government succeeded in appeasing their anger, by the assurance that the delinquent should be submitted to the form of trial provided by the constitution of their government.

Capponi prepared for the event with a temperate resolution, which disarmed the most zealous of his enemies of the ferocity with which they had panted for his blood. His harangue was manly, and at the same time marked with the modesty of his character. Francesco Carducci had, in the brief interval between his offence and his trial, been elected to fill the chair from which he had been so injuriously expelled. After unfolding the views by which he had been governed, and showing that in these he had been seconded by many of those who still deservedly enjoyed the public confidence, he by degrees began to abandon the argumentative method, which he saw had convinced his hearers and assured his acquittal from their justice if not from their passion ; till, warming with indignant pride, and forgetful of the jeopardy in which his life was placed, he abandoned himself to the contemplation of what he had done himself for his country in emulation of three generations of his forefathers. "But whence is it inferred," he exclaimed, "that the charge on which my son was to be despatched to Rome, which seems the gravest of all the accusations against me, was one of evil consequence to the peace and happiness of these walls? Is it from that which is seen upon my face, or in that which has fallen from my lips? Is it then in my actions, because I was the first to vindicate for the citizens those rights which had been usurped by the Medici? Is it from my life of sixty years, which I have lived in such a manner that

no man has been able to charge me with a single wrong? Is it from the death of Piero my father, or from the life of Neri my grandfather, or from the acts of the long line of my ancestors, performed by them for the liberty and advancement of the commonwealth; or from the poverty of all who bear our name? My father, to maintain the liberties of this republic, in the midst of a war of hostile and barbarous nations, tore, in the presence of the king of France, the instrument which proposed the sacrifice of her rights—and he was but a private citizen! And what! shall I, Gonfalonier of Justice, in the midst of my friehds, and kindred, and fellow-citizens, shall I make terms to render her a slave? Shall I, who might enjoy a life of liberty to the eternal honour of my name, exchange it for the condition of slavery to its perpetual shame? Wherefore I pray you all, and you especially, my judges and fellow-citizens, that you will well reflect, in deciding upon this my cause, that my accuser is Jacopo Gherardi; and that I, who with all truth defend myself, am Nicolo, the son of Piero Capponi—that in your hands and your votes are not alone my honour and my life, the life and honour of a citizen of Florence, but the honour and safety of this city and of the Florentine people. This, fellow-citizens, is the scope and object of Jacopo Gherardi, and those who use him as their instrument; not so much that they may injure me, as to reduce the commonwealth into a private good—to make of this public, free, popular government, a personal power and license; nor do they see, blinded by envy, and avarice, and ambition, that they themselves pursue in this the certain road to place, with all our common shame and loss, this glorious and illustrious and powerful city, with all its wide and flourishing empire, in the power of the pope; and consequently (which may God forbid) to change its freedom and prosperity to misery and perpetual servitude."

Before Capponi had made an end of his address, it

became evident that the opinions of his hearers had already acquitted him. Gherardi was quick to perceive the escape of his victim, and, springing to his feet, exclaimed, "If the ballots do not, this shall win the game;" and he brandished his dagger in the presence of the assembly. On the other hand, a partizan of the deposed Gonfalonier, a certain Lorenzo Berardi, in a similar attitude in front of Gherardi cried out, "and this," as he shook his poniard in the face of his adversary, "this shall unwin it again." The matter, however, was not to be settled by the voice of the council, nor by the influence of either party in the administration. The whole city had armed for one who had given so many proofs of an exalted patriotism and a disinterested love of its interests. Tumultuous crowds demanded the safety of the accused, and possessing themselves of his person, conveyed him in triumph to his home; "so that," says his historian, "he was attended by a greater and more enthusiastically affectionate concourse of his fellow-citizens on his deposition, than even when by their unanimous voice he had gone to clothe himself in the ensigns of their highest magistracy." The next day he was seen in the garb of a private citizen attending to his domestic concerns in the public places of the city; but apprehensive that his presence might yet become a cause of dissention and tumult, he early withdrew from its walls; and with no regret but for the dangers which he beheld impending over his country, he retired to his patrimonial estate without the town, abandoning all thoughts of what he had been in the state, or yet might be, for the quiet enjoyment of private life in the bosom of his family.

The deposition of Capponi convinced the pope that nothing was to be hoped for his favourites from the Florentines. Resolving not, however, to be crossed in his views, he abandoned himself to the alliance with Cæ-

sar, to which we have already alluded ;* contented to secure by such aid the end so long desired, and otherwise so desperate of attainment. For a short time the hopes of the commonwealth were placed upon Francis and France; but when, after a brief hesitation, that monarch and that country became parties to the treaty which then combined so many enemies, the proud and indignant but still not terrified or humbled republicans, perceived that they were left to maintain single-handed their independence against the powers of Europe, or to yield it up a sacrifice to the unhallowed combination of its ruthless enemies and worthless friends.

"Florence, during the whole period of its glory and power, had neglected the arts of war: it reckoned for its defence on the adventurers whom its wealth could summon from all parts to its service; and set but little value on a courage which men, without any other virtue, were so eager to sell to the highest bidder. Since the Transalpine nations had begun to subdue Italy to their tyranny, these hireling arms sufficed no longer for the public safety. Statesmen began to see the necessity of giving the republic a protection within itself. Macchiavelli, who died on the 22d of June, 1527, six weeks after the restoration of the popular government, had been long engaged in persuading his fellow-citizens of the necessity of awakening a military spirit in the people: it was he who caused the country militia, named *l'ordinanza*, to be formed into regiments. A body of mercenaries, organized by Giovanni de' Medici, a distant kinsman of the pope's, served at the time as a military school for the Tuscans, among whom alone the corps had been raised: it acquired a high reputation under the name of *bande nere.* No infantry equalled it in courage and intelligence. Five thousand of these warriors served under Lautrec in the

* See page 222 and note.

kingdom of Naples, where they almost all perished. When, towards the end of the year 1528, the Florentines perceived that their situation became more and more critical, they formed, among those who enjoyed the greatest privileges in their country, two bodies of militia, which displayed the utmost valour for its defence. The first, consisting of 300 young men of noble families, undertook the guard of the palace and the support of the constitution; the second, of 4000 soldiers drawn only from among families having a right to sit in the council-general, were called the civic militia: both soon found opportunities of proving that generosity and patriotism suffice to create, in a very short period, the best soldiers."*

An animation like that which now prevailed in the minds of her citizens with an unanimity of principle and purpose, had long been unknown to the unfortunate republic. Every thing breathed war, and every breast seemed eager for the commencement of its labours. Those cities which, like Arezzo, Pistoja, and Pisa, were supposed hostile to the success of the Florentines, were compelled to give sureties for their fidelity; and those which, like Florence herself, now raised for the last time the standard of Italian liberty, and made with her a common cause against the pretensions of the ambitious priest and mercenary barbarian, were placed under direction of her officers specially charged for their defence. Never before had Tuscany witnessed such a scene of preparation, or been agitated by an array like this of foreign and domestic arms. Her last banner was spread to the wind, and her last sword was girded to the side of her sons; and if she could not vindicate, against the resistless force of numbers and discipline, the liberty of her few resolved and gallant children; if she could not give back to those who had abandoned it and fled from it and betrayed it, the freedom which had mark-

* Sismondi.

ed them in the long ages when Europe's brightest history was their's; her last field was worthy at least of her early renown, and the sacrifice of her liberties was not unworthy of a people who had lived under the protection of equal laws, and been dignified by the long exercise of equal rights.

It was necessary, in the exterminating war with which Clement now threatened his countrymen, that none of the usual implements required for successful aggression or resistance should be wanting. The city required not only to be fortified against the innumerable arms with which she knew she would be attacked, but with the means of support for her thick population in case the vigour of her resistance should at any time compel her enemies to abandon the hope of reducing her by storm, and to resort as a last hope to the less satisfactory process of a siege. The threatening aspect of affairs had long, moreover, dried up all the usual sources of the revenue, and extraordinary measures were to be put in force for the purpose of raising such a fund as the extraordinary exigency of the case and times made requisite. All the ordinary forms for the protection, and sometimes for the favour, of the rich were necessarily abrogated; and when an equal taxation failed to yield the necessary supply, the individuals whom the commissioners indicated as most able to bear such an impost, were called upon again and again to minister to the wants of the republic from those stores, which in her happier days the protection of her equal laws, her justice, and her policy, had enabled them to accumulate; until at last it became the only duty of these commissioners, in the apportionment of the public burthens, to ascertain the fifty, the hundred, or the two hundred, from whom the republic had the best right to expect a restoration of some of the goods which she had formerly bestowed. Nor was this the only means to which the magistracy considered itself justified, or found itself necessitated, to resort. As the war in which the city was about to be

involved, was peculiarly a war against the head of the ecclesiastical system of Europe, it seemed especially proper, and, as it were, retributive, to draw upon those of the establishment whom circumstances placed within her reach. A large portion of the goods of the church were declared, therefore, to be subject to the exigencies of the state, and were thus accordingly seized for the public use. All the ornaments that ecclesiastical pride had set upon the altar, the fruits of ecclesiastical extortion; all that pious or superstitious devotion had sacrificed to religion or religious fear, was torn from its place, and converted into a means of resistance to the head of the hierarchy; and while these compulsory measures brought a vast increase to the public treasures, the zeal of the *arts* and *corporations* by voluntary contributions swelled them in such a manner as to place the magistracy in perfect security against a possible failure of this means of defence. Unfortunately it was not so easy to make provision in the other particular, no less important to the safety and preservation of the town. Against a siege of any definite length, though it should include all the seasons of the year, the means of resistance on this point might be secured. But the nature of the league was such that the blockade of the city might be deferred for any length of time, for which provision could not be made while all the circumjacent country would naturally be occupied by the enemy. Still, whatever remained to be done, was faithfully and prudently executed by the diligent administration to which was confided the honourable charge of resisting the papal aggression, and of preparing for the last struggle of the last of the *Italian Republics*. The husbandmen were ordered to bring in the fruits of the last harvests, which had been remarkably abundant. While all were intent upon the means of defence, there were many at the head of affairs who still apprehended that the citizens might yet incline to an accord with the

pope; they urged, therefore, those who were most ardent in the performance of this duty, to acts of violence against such members of the Medicean family as yet remained within their jurisdiction; and the confusion of the unprotected fields, compelled to pour their produce into the unhappy city, afforded ample opportunity to those who might find a satisfaction for the misfortunes of their country in the injury of the friends of its enemies. The houses and fields of the hated members of this family, and of those who adhered to its interests, were burned and spoiled; and those whose duty it might be considered to watch that no private wrong should be perpetrated in the public name, rejoiced, perhaps, in secret that the people had thus rendered themselves as obnoxious to the vengeance of the public enemy as they themselves, who, in case of unsuccessful resistance, might seem to be particularly implicated as rebels and ringleaders of rebellion.

As a last measure of preparation, seven commissaries were elected to preside, with little less than dictatorial power, over the destinies of the republic in this her last approaching conflict. The names of these individuals have not been particularly distinguished in the histories of the times; nor were they of the few who, when all did well, and much was to be done, exalted themselves above the common virtue to obtain a special notice as the defenders of their country and of human liberty. It must, however, be borne in mind, that all who bore a part in the defence of Florence, were raised above the ordinary virtue of men by valour, by patient endurance, and ardent love of liberty; and that to have been not superior to the humblest of these, was yet, perhaps, to have been superior to the age. We shall therefore give the names of these individuals, inasmuch as it does appear not unworthy the labour, to preserve the memory of all, the least of those who bore a part in the defence of the last republic of Europe. Jacopo Morelli, Zanobi Carnesecche, Anton

Francesco Albizzi, Bernardo di Castiglione, Alfonso Strozzi, Agostini Dini, and Filippo Baroncini, were chosen to this high office of guardians of the public liberty.

When now it became obvious that the danger could not be avoided, the promised services of Hercules of Este were claimed by the Florentines; but the aspect of affairs in the eyes of his father, the duke of Ferrara, did not appear sufficiently flattering to justify the hazard; and, after a long delay, his personal presence was not only refused, but the forces of the imperialists were swollen by the reinforcement of those troops which had been promised to the Florentines.

In the meanwhile the emperor arrived at Genoa, and the magistracy thought it expedient to try yet once again the force of remonstrance, and to endeavour if possible to withdraw him from the league which had been formed for their ruin. To convince him of the injustice of the war to which he lent his soldiers and his name, would have been no difficult matter; but the ruins of Rome bore witness yet that no consideration of right or justice had rule in the councils of Charles. It was in vain, therefore, that Strozzi, Soderini, Girolami, and Capponi, the delegates of Florence, urged the rights of their city and the justice of their cause; nor could they bear to enter again the walls of their native city, which had sent them forth with her last hope to bring back the annunciation of her determined ruin. Strozzi betook himself to Venice, in which city he yet might live under the protection of the republican name, if not of republican laws; Soderini retired to Lucca, and Girolami alone returned, to nerve his fellow-citizens to the last resolve of desperate resistance. Capponi had intended to do the same; to bear a part in the last struggle which he had endeavoured vainly to avert, and to fall in her last hour. He was met, however, on his way at Castelnuovo di Garfignana, by numbers

of the flying citizens, among whom was Michael Angelo, with tidings of new disasters in the fortunes of the devoted city. The old man had borne his own misfortunes with a patience which had not failed to restore him to his fellow-citizens, who at this their greatest need had again recourse to his prudence and integrity. In the bitterness of his regret he now accused himself of participating in the divisions which had brought this ruin on his country, and falling into a melancholy which threatened his life, and shortly after terminated it, he cried with his last breath, "Alas! my country, to what have we reduced thee!" Nor had his friends long reason to weep over his loss; he had grown old in honours, and his death released him from the shame and sorrow of seeing the savage hordes, which, under the prince of Orange, had desolated the cities of the South, now under the guidance of the same leader arrayed against all that he had been accustomed to love and to revere.

If any doubt for a moment existed as to the treatment which Florence was to expect from her enemy in case that he should prove victorious, the eagerness of the unpaid soldiers of Spain, who crowded to participate in the labours of the siege, must have speedily removed it. Many soldiers of the armies which had pillaged the cities of Rome and Milan had been stationed or had settled in those capitals, and from their lawless lives had embroiled themselves with the citizens whom their imperial master's interests would no longer suffer them to treat as public enemies. Such offenders were now handed over to the municipal authorities, and the civil courts were crowded with suitors for indemnity against the private wrongs of these marauders. When, on a sudden, intelligence of the contemplated leaguer of Florence arrived in those places, all who found themselves thus bound, exclaimed that they had now a right to demand their liberation, and insisted now on their part on receiving

indemnity for any loss to be sustained by them in consequence of absence from the storm and the sack. Others, as they came in sight of the walls, exclaimed aloud, "Prepare your goblets of silver and gold, we come to crown them, Florence, with our sabres and pikes," or with other expressions of similar import.

Malatesta Baglioni was still in Perugia, his subject dominion, when the army of the prince of Orange was marshalled on his borders between Foligno and Spello. On the approach of the imperialists the garrison was withdrawn by capitulation to Arezzo, against which the enemy next displayed itself, and which was destined to witness some of the most remarkable achievements of this sanguinary war. Here also it was thought expedient to retire before the opposing force, for the purpose of concentrating the strength of the whole province in the capital. The course and the result of the conflict proved how injudicious were these measures. Florence was sufficiently strong for armed resistance; and had she been able to effect a diversion on the side of her strongest dependencies, and wearied out the enemy in long and fruitless endeavours against them, the war could not have been continued for any great period by the prince of Orange and the imperial generals, with soldiers who clamoured for the spoils of war, and whose avarice would hardly wait upon the tedious issue of so many doubtful sieges and unprofitable fights.

For a long time Florence had been filled with an active and resolute population, breathing the spirit of liberty and anxious for battle. Yet a number of those who did not participate in this spirit, for a while distracted the councils of the city, and sought to weaken the efforts which the more resolute were preparing to make for the common defence. As the prince of Orange approached, the fears of these individuals became more clamorous, until at last they found themselves unable to bear the contempt or hatred of their fellows,

and took the resolution of abandoning their country and passing over to the ranks of its enemies. Among these the historian is almost ashamed to write the name of Guicciardini. Yet this was not the greatest of his offences to his native city with which he sullied the glory of his literary life and labours.

"On the fifth of October, Orange moved from Feghine, but marched so slowly in expectation of the artillery from Siena, which was not far off, that he did not arrive with all his troops and cannon in the plain of Ripoli, two miles from Florence, before the twentieth; and on the twenty-fourth he encamped with all his army on the hills near the fortifications, one part of the troops posting themselves upon the higher grounds that overlooked the city all along from the gate of San Miniato to that of San Giorgio, while another wing extended themselves from over against the gate of San Miniato as far as the road from the gate of San Nicolo."*

The reduction of the places which had yielded to Orange on his way towards the capital, had not dispirited the inhabitants of that city; and the imperialists began to be sensible that without the aid of those forces which Cæsar still kept in the field against the duke of Milan and the Venetians, they might be unable to force the walls of the well-defended place, or even, perhaps, to maintain themselves against the impetuous sallies of the besieged. It became, therefore, an object of primary importance to the pope that Charles should enter into an accord with those powers, and transfer his forces from their dominions to the seat of war in Tuscany. "Though Cæsar had not come into Italy with an inclination to make an agreement with these powers, especially with Francesco, yet meeting with greater difficulties in the course of his affairs than he had imagined in Spain, and finding

* Guicciardini.

it not easy to acquire the state of Milan since the new alliance which Francesco Sforza had made with the Venetians, and further also that he had involved himself in vast expences for maintaining so many troops as he had brought out of Spain and Germany, he abated of his former stiffness. And he was much more pliable, because solicited by his brother to pass into Germany, on account of the tumults of the Lutherans, and of other signs of innovations which appeared in that country, whither it was also probable the Turks would sometime return. For it was very well known that Solyman, when he broke up from Vienna, fired with shame and indignation, had sworn that he would soon return with a much greater force. It appearing also to Cæsar not only unsafe, but hardly honourable, to depart out of Italy and leave things imperfect, he began to incline his mind, not only to make an agreement with the Venetians, but also to pardon Francesco Sforza, for which the pontiff made great instances, being desirous of universal quiet, and that Cæsar finding himself disengaged from other enterprises might turn all his arms against Florence. It took up about a month to debate on the difficulties of an accommodation, which at last was concluded with both on the 23d of December, the pope taking a world of pains about it. As soon as the difficulties, which were under debate, were digested, so as to leave no room to doubt of bringing the agreement to perfection, Cæsar, having removed his troops from the state of the Venetians, sent four thousand German foot, two thousand five hundred Spanish foot, eight hundred Italians, and above three hundred light horse, with twenty-five pieces of artillery, to the war against the Florentines."*

The refusal of Ercole d'Este to assume the command of the Florentines, under authority of the title of captain-general, which they had conferred on him, had

* Guicciardini.

rendered the choice of a successor or substitute necessary. Between Malatesta and Stefano Colonna the Florentines limited their choice; but the latter considering himself but as a soldier of the French king, and as serving the Florentines only as the officer of an ally, refused to exchange the partial command which in that capacity he exercised, for the more unlimited control with which the magistracy would have invested him. He still, therefore, retained the post which he held as chief of the guard disposed for the protection of the least trusted division of the walls, and abandoned to Malatesta the election which that leader greedily coveted.

As yet the prince of Orange had attempted nothing against the city itself, content with reducing the neighbouring towns and country. The tenth of November was chosen for a first essay; and as the Florentines were in the habit of celebrating with extraordinary festivities the evening of that day as the vigil of St. Martin, it was expected that a well-concerted surprise might place the city in the hands of the imperialists, and thus determine by a single blow the fate of the war. According to previous arrangements, this attack was made; but Orange found that the interests of the defence had not been neglected in the festive employments of the day. Along the whole line of the ramparts the cry was called *to arms;* and though four hundred scaling ladders had been fixed to the walls, the urban guard defended their charge with so much zeal and efficacy, that on no occasion did the enemy obtain possession of the fortifications. An assault of Colonna on the army of the besiegers, made exactly one month afterwards, was more successful. While it was yet in doubt whether the surprise might not result in a total defeat of the enemy, and cause him to withdraw his forces and to raise the siege, the impetuous and ardent citizens were astounded by the trumpet

of Malatesta which sounded a retreat.* Thus ended, by the treachery or jealousy of their military chief, the fairest probability which had yet offered itself to the Florentines of terminating a disastrous and fatal conflict by a single victory. Malatesta had been strenuously opposed to the sally which had proved so fortunate, and it would ill have accorded with his hopes of advantage that a subaltern, by opposition to his counsels, should effect the liberties of a city whose fate had been entrusted to his care. Two days afterwards a further victory, obtained by another leader of the Florentines, the commissary Ferrucci, still more elated the citizens, who now began to entertain increasing hopes of a favourable issue to the perilous contest.

Ferrucci, who bears so conspicuous and honourable a part in the labours of this memorable siege, was altogether one of the most remarkable personages to which the great events of that period gave birth. His family had for many generations been at once respectable and obscure, having given not a single magistrate or even citizen of distinction to the republic, except his grandfather, who in the time of Lorenzo had borne himself with some credit in the wars for the recovery of Pietra, Santa, and Sarzana. He had himself been brought up with his brother Simon to commercial employments; but on the forming of the Black Bands of Giovanni de' Medici, he had attached himself to that troop, and continued with them through all their remarkable career, and in all the vicissitudes of their fortunes. At the period at which we have now arrived he was in the command of the fortress of Eupoli, from whence he had been active in furnishing

* "It happened that, on the night of the eleventh of December, Stefano Colonna, with one thousand harquebusiers, and four hundred between halberds and partisans, all in corselets, and, after the Spanish custom, with their shirts over their arms, attacked the regiment of Sciarra Colonna quartered in the houses near the church of Santa Margherita a Montici, and killed and took a great number without losing a man."—*Guicciardini*.

the capital with supplies of provisions, which permitted them to keep untouched their proper stock. Numerous skirmishes, and more especially the storming and re-taking of San Miniato, had acquired him the love and admiration of his soldiers to such a degree as to inspire them with the belief of absolute invincibility under his guidance. Notwithstanding the dangers presented by the leaguer of the city, the hope of final success in resistance was not so wholly abandoned as to render the high offices of the administration less desired than they had been in the better days of the republic. The term of Carducci's Gonfalonierate was drawing to a close, and the city was divided in the choice of his successor. In spite of all his endeavours, and of claims for faithful services rendered in the difficult moments during which he had directed the government, he did not succeed to have his name inserted among the list of the candidates. A determined hostility, even greater than his own to the Medici and the aristocracy, was made the standard of eligibility; and the choice of the council fell at last upon Raffaele Gerolami, the only one of the delegates to Charles who had returned to the city, and who had signalized his animosity to the cause of Clement since the moment of his return by a bitterness that recommended him beyond every competitor to the sympathy and regard of the citizens.

During all this period the siege was proceeding but slowly. The Florentines, inflamed by the zeal and enthusiasm of the Dominicans, who still adhered to their former opinions and intermingled with spiritual instruction their political doctrines, were wound up to a pitch of resolution bordering upon frenzy. Not satisfied with repulsing daily the attacks of the enemy, they demanded to be led to the assault; and every sally served by partial success to encourage and inflame them to greater daring and more hazardous enterprizes. It is pleasing to record the name of a son

of one, who, like Macchiavelli, had but lived for his country, among those most prominent and daring in her defence on this occasion of her last extremity. Ludovico, the son of that great historian and political philosopher, in the sallies of the military and the urban guard, became particularly distinguished by his boldness and address, and deserved no small portion of the glory of an exploit which had nearly resulted in the liberation of the city. Three columns from the city had been designated to commence an attack, according to a concerted plan, along the line of the enemy's encampment. The column under Signorelli had already commenced the engagement, and being seconded by that of Bartolomeo del Monte and Ridolfo di Assisi, had given full occupation to the enemy, when the movement of the third under Amico da Venafro must have effected his perfect rout. An accident prevented the timely manœuvre which had been so prudently concerted, and the columns already engaged, unable to bear the whole weight of the imperialist force, were compelled to retire. Their withdrawal, however, though it lost the victory, was by no means a defeat; and their entrance into the city with all the order of discipline was hailed as a triumph by the spirited populace. Five thousand citizens, filled with the enthusiasm which so long and so successful a maintenance of this struggle could not fail to engender, met in the cathedral church, and there, having required the magistracy to join in the rite, renewed upon the altar of their religion the solemn vow to hold the walls to the last moment against the public enemy, and to shed the last drop of their blood for the support of the constitution and the liberties of the people. A unanimous and universal ardour possessed the bosoms of all; a few individuals whom fear or the hope of reward was able to win from the general feeling, seemed to the exalted minds of the rest to have stripped off the character of humanity, and to have divested them-

selves of all claim to the sympathy of men engaged in the support of holy a cause, and whom these individuals would have sold with all the sacred interests depending on their persons. No measure of indignation was observed towards the suspected; and in the general execration, those who merely did not share the common hatred of the family for whom Florence was compelled to undergo and suffer so much, were sometimes confused with the more criminal, who did not confine to opinion and sympathy their favour for the outlawed Medici. Those historians who have written the eulogies of the Medici as the history of Florence, have found, therefore, much to object to the Florentines in the cruelty with which offences of this kind were punished by the magistracy; and the fate of the son of the famous Ficino is cited as evidence of their injustice and tyranny. That youth, at a moment when the feelings of the people had been greatly excited by a discovered treachery, had imprudently maintained in public the claims of Cosimo to the title of *Father of his country*. This ill-timed argument was construed into a capital offence against the existing opinions, and the young disputant was condemned to expiate his offence with the loss of his head.

While Florence was thus resolutely defending herself within her walls, her faithful cities, unable to resist the attack of the imperialists, were daily falling into their hands. Pistoja, Prato, Pietra Santa, and Mutrone, had surrendered some time before; San Gemignano had been taken, and Volterra, entrusted to the care of an unskilful governor, had transferred its allegiance. The last hope of the wearied but still determined citizens was now placed on Ferruccio. He had still kept the field, and in almost every engagement had proved an over-match for the best generals of the imperial arms. Abandoning Empoli on receiving news of the defection of Volterra, he undertook to recover it to the republic; nor was it long before the ensigns of

Florence were seen to float again from its battlements. His departure, however, from Empoli was fatal to that place; the imperialists directed all their force against its walls, which Ferruccio had rendered impregnable. But the constancy of the officer who should have supplied his place, gave way before the numbers with which he was to contend, and Empoli was delivered up by the cowardice or treachery of Andrea Giugni and Piero Orlandini to the troops of Sarmiento and Vitelli. No sooner had this important fortress yielded to the enemy, than the forces which had been detached for its reduction were re-united to the army of Maramaus for the recovery of Volterra. But Ferruccio was a very different antagonist. Sarmiento, the successful leader at Empoli, and many others of the best captains of Cæsar and the pope, were slain before the walls of the well-defended city.*

It is unnecessary to prolong the account of this disastrous siege. Florence had done all that she could do, and more than ought to have been expected; but she had done it in vain for the preservation of her liberties, though not for the glory of her last hours of freedom. We close the history of this fatal event with an extract from the narration of her great contemporary historian, who witnessed the fall of the gallant republic, and who lived to regret, in infamy and neglect, the part as well which he had not borne in her defence, as that which he afterwards bore in the establishment of the throne of her tyrants. "The dearth of provisions increased in Florence, which no longer received

* "As soon as the marquis del Guasto had taken Empoli, he marched with those troops to join Maramaus in the suburb of Volterra; and making together six thousand foot, they set about battering the place, and having made a breach of about forty braces, they gave three assaults in vain, with the loss of above four hundred men. They then erected a new battery, and gave a vigorous assault with Italian and Spanish foot mixed together, but were repulsed with greater loss than in the former assault, so that the siege was raised." —*Guicciardini.*

supplies from any quarter, and yet the obstinacy of the people was not at all diminished; and Ferruccio being come from Volterra to Pisa, and assembling as many troops as possible, all the hopes of the Florentines rested on his arrival. For they had sent him orders, that by any way, and at all hazards, he should put himself on his march to come to them, designing, as soon as he had joined the troops in Florence, to march out and attack the enemy. In this design the happiness of the success was no greater than the rashness of the resolution had been extraordinary, if those counsels can be called rash which are prompted by the last necessity; for a passage must be made through hostile countries, in the possession of a very numerous army, though dispersed into many places.

"The prince, having notice of the design, took a part of the army, and, reinforcing it with several bodies of Italian foot, having perhaps, as the Florentines supposed, received private assurances from Malatesta Baglione, with whom he held very close correspondence, that he would not attack the army in his absence, put himself on his march to encounter Ferruccio; and finding him near Cavinana, in the mountain of Pistoja, which road he had taken in passing from Pisa, on the side of Lucca, out of confidence in the faction of the Cancellieri, which affected popular government, attacked him with a much superior force. Here the prince, performing rather the duty of a private man-at-arms than of a general, rashly pushing himself forwards, was killed; his troops, however, obtained the victory, in which, among many others, were taken Giampaolo da Ceri, and also Ferruccio, who being thus a prisoner, was killed by Maramaus, out of a spleen, as it was said, conceived against him, when, in the siege of Volterra, he ordered a trumpeter, whom he had sent into the place with a certain message, to be hanged.

"The Florentines, thus abandoned of all divine and

human assistance, and the famine prevailing without any further hopes of relief, yet greater was the obstinacy of those who opposed an agreement. These men, induced by the last desperation not to suffer their own ruin to be unattended with the destruction of their country, and no longer debating whether they or others of the citizens should die to save their country, but willing to have their country perish together with them, were also followed by many, who had an impression on their mind that God would certainly vouchsafe miraculous assistance, but that it would not appear before affairs were reduced to such extremities as to be in a manner quite without resource. And there was danger that the war would end with the utter extermination of that city, because the magistrates, and almost all those who had the public authority in their hands, concurred in this obstinacy, there remaining no room for others, who were of contrary sentiments, to offer any thing in contradiction for fear of the magistrates, and the menaces of arms, if Malatesta Baglione, knowing the case remediless, had not in a manner forced them to agree; induced perhaps merely by pity to see so famous a city wholly ruined by the madness of its citizens, and the disgrace and damage that would result to himself from being present at so great a desolation; but much more, as it is supposed, from the hopes of obtaining leave of the pope, by means of this agreement, to return to Perugia. Wherefore, while the magistracy, and those of hotter spirits, were debating on giving orders to the troops to march out of the city, and engage with the enemy, who were much more numerous, and strongly posted, and Malatesta refused, they grew to such a height of distraction, that they discharged him from his command, and sent some of the most pertinacious among them to give him notice of it, with orders to depart with his troops out of the city. This declaration put him in such a rage, that with a poniard, which he had by his

side, he wounded one of them, and would have killed him, had he not been rescued by the attendants. The others being in a consternation, and the city beginning to rise, those who were not so mad as the rest, repressed the rashness of the Gonfalonier, who armed himself, and threatened sometimes to attack Malatesta, and sometimes to march out and fight the enemy.

" At last the extreme obstinacy of many gave place to the extreme necessity of all, and therefore on the ninth of August four ambassadors were deputed to Don Ferrando da Gonzaga, who, since the death of the prince, had the chief command of the army, the marquis del Guasto having left the camp long before, and the next day a convention was concluded. The principal articles, besides obliging the city to pay, within a very few days, eighty thousand ducats for removing the army, imported, that the pope and the city should give authority to Cæsar to declare, within three months, what should be the form of government, with a reserve however to liberty: that there should be a general amnesty of all injuries done to the pope, his friends and servants; and that, till the declaration arrived from Cæsar, Malatesta Baglione should remain with two thousand foot for the guard of the city.

" The agreement being made, while the money was getting ready for paying off the army, for which there was occasion for a much larger sum, the pope not being very forward to assist the city with money in so great an exigency, Bartolomeo Valori, who was the apostolic commissary, concerting measures with Malatesta wholly intent on his return to Perugia, called an assembly of the people in parliament in the Great Square, according to the ancient custom of the city, the magistrates and the rest giving way to it out of fear, and there instituted a new form of government, giving authority by parliament to twelve citizens, adherents to the Medici, to settle the government of the city after their manner, who reduced it to the same

form in which it usually stood before the year one thousand five hundred twenty-seven."*

The conquest of Florence and the fall of the republic revenged the quarrel of the ancient Ghibelines, and proved, though after a lapse of so many ages, the soundness of their principles and the validity of their objections to the Romish ascendancy in the councils of their nation. A heavy retribution now brought upon the children of those who had been so often triumphant in the papal cause, the full and overpowering burthen of the papal ambition, and crushed the liberty which Guelphs and Ghibelines had jointly established. With this catastrophe the whole Peninsula returned to a condition differing but little from that to which it had been reduced by the barbarian conquests of the earlier ages, and from which the treaty of Constance, A. D. 1183, had liberated it. As then the fate of its cities and people was decided exclusively by the successes of tribes, in whose interests they were not permitted to concern themselves, and whose very language was unintelligible to their ears; so now the shifting policy of the courts of France and Spain and Austria, to say nothing of the inferior continental powers, and of England, determined, with the changes of each varying moment, the fortunes of Italy. The very wrecks of those glorious ages in which her independent states preserved for Europe the vital spark of freedom, serve to show that the best days of Italy were not those of the Roman aristocracy or of imperial luxury, and vindicate for the republics of the middle ages a character as much above that of the ancient Romans in regard to the arts of life, as in the more important points of political wisdom.†

* Guicciardini.

† "However repugnant it may be to our ideas of ancient superiority, yet modern times have seen a building arise, which far eclipses in proportions, and probably in decorations, any which the most flourishing times of Greece and Rome could boast. If we extended the comparison to Babylon or Egyptian Thebes, the balance would

Florence had yet, perhaps, one consolation in her fall. She had resisted while resistance was a virtue, and defended, as far as valour could defend, the sacred charge with which she had been entrusted. The faithlessness of her hired leader had destroyed her hopes, but she yet might boast of her children, and point to them as the strenuous champions of freedom. Nor was this an idle boast of no avail for the future; since, had her children still continued true to her interests and her fame, the victories of Charles and Clement might have been acquired in vain. Even when the force of arms had wrested from the citizens the government of their choice, we have seen that it was still deemed expedient to trust them at least with the apparent exercise of their former liberty, in the creation of a new constitution; and, as it has well been observed, the sovereignty of the people was recognised in the very act which was to annihilate that sovereignty forever. The great bell sounded to collect the multitude for this last execution of the functions of majesty, and was then broken by order of the new authorities, to indicate that that multitude was never again to assemble, and that those high attributes were never more to be exercised by a people thus suddenly transformed into a mob. Thus it was evident that even the bayonets of Charles were not sufficient to encourage the timid pontiff to an open assumption of sovereign power in the city which he had conquered by treachery and by arms; and Florence was still governed, at least in appearance and nominally, by her proper magistrates and laws. From this moment the treason of her own citizens is answerable for her degradation and ruin. To them, or such of them as had been proved and found subservient to the

probably be decidedly against the modern edifice. But as Greece and Rome are the usual standards to which we appeal for objects of grandeur and magnificence, I was anxious to point out the fact, that their utmost efforts had been surpassed by a people who are called their degenerate descendants."—*Burton's Rome.*

interests of Rome, was entrusted the execution of the ecclesiastical vengeance. Poison and the axe were placed at their command, and all who had signalized by their patriotism, evidenced in exploits of valour, in prudence of counsel, or fortitude of resistance, the last hours of the commonwealth and common liberty, were submitted to the eager servility of the new satellites of power. Carducci died by their sentence upon the scaffold; Girolami, of poison administered in the scanty food of a prisoner of state; Benedetto da Fajano, the successor of Savonarola, falling into the hands of Clement, was ordered to be gradually starved to death by the daily diminution of his wretched allowance; and upwards of five hundred citizens, at first condemned to banishment, were driven by a cruel artifice to violate the bounds prescribed, in order that the insatiable thirst of the vindictive prelate and his kinsman might not be denied its feast of blood. The individuals to whom the Medici had entrusted the cares of their interests and their revenge, who thus poured out the blood of Florence's best citizens, condemning to exile in the name of mercy, and ruining by oppressive impositions such as they did not dare to touch in their persons; who disarmed the populace, and hired foreign arms to overawe the few that were not yet subdued; the panders, in a word, to regal pride and ecclesiastical malice, were the historian Guicciardini, Francesco Vettori, Roberto Acciajuoli, and Bartolommeo Valori.

But all the zeal of these unhesitating agents could not satisfy the desires of Clement. He had contracted Alexander to the daughter of Charles, as a step towards his establishment of a throne in Florence; and until he could behold the accomplishment of this his last wish, he seemed to have failed in the object of all his desires, and to have brought in vain upon his native city the horrors of the contest which she had just so honourably, but at the same time so fatally, sustained.

On the 5th of August, however, of the year succeeding that in which the imperialists had entered the city, Alexander de' Medici made his appearance among his destined subjects, when an envoy of the emperor proclaimed to the citizens the will of that imperious master for the new formation of their government. He restored to them their former privileges, it was asserted, on condition that they should recognize his son-in-law as the head of the republic, with hereditary privileges secured to his issue, or, in default thereof, to the other branches of his family; a condition at once subversive of the institutions which it assumed to restore. These terms accepted, the condition of the state might seem to be secured; and Clement, indeed, perceived that he could no longer openly exact from its citizens a more perfect recognition of his kinsman's authority as a sovereign prince. His only expedient, therefore, was to gain the Florentines themselves to such a change as should gratify his vanity with a name more princely than that which the proclamation of the emperor had required for his favourite. The ministers whom we have already named, were more than ready instruments to his hand; but Filippo de' Nerli, another contemporary historian, and, above all, Filippo Strozzi, were solicitous and officious in bringing about the consummation so profoundly desired by the vain ecclesiastic. Filippo Strozzi had formerly distinguished himself as the advocate of popular liberty, and, anxious to obliterate the memory of that opposition to the papal desires, he now surpassed the most abject of his fellows in the furtherance of Clement's wish.

On the 4th of April, 1532, a new assembly, convened by the Balia under the direction of the superserviceable agents of the pope and the Medici, proceeded to the reform of the state and city of Florence; and the act by which this body was convened, as if in anticipation of the arbitrary changes which it was about to introduce, omitted the name of the *people* and of the

republic, which, in all previous modifications of the government and constitution, had been acknowledged as the paramount authority. It was not till the 27th that the new constitution was promulgated, when the citizens were summoned to hear the decree which was to fix their destinies, and which they could not resist. The first important change abolished the office of Gonfalonier of Justice and the college of the Signory, a magistracy which had existed now for the better part of three whole centuries, and had become identified with all the glories of Florence in the eventful history of such a length of years. To this extinction of the commonwealth even in its minute exterior forms, the constituent assembly could add but little which it might not expect the citizens to accept. It declared the prince Alexander, duke of Florence, with a title transmissible lineally and collaterally; establishing thus that power which six generations had been engaged in erecting on the ruins of Florentine liberty. For the assistance of the sovereign, and not for the protection of the people, it instituted a council of Two Hundred, composed by nomination of the duke from all the highest orders of the city, and out of which a chosen number of forty-four should be selected to constitute a senate. The members of these assemblies, like the duke himself, were to hold their offices during life. A special, or, as it were, cabinet council was again elected from the senate; while all the executive power was lodged in the arbitrary will of the duke or of his lieutenant-deputy. Such was the government which the Balia of the Florentine citizens substituted for the constitution of the illustrious republic, and such the officers created to supersede the Signory and the Gonfalonier.

Florence had now submitted herself to an absolute master, without a limit to his power either in regard to the manner of its exercise or the time of its duration. The popular license, of which the wealthier had com-

plained under the republican regimen, might now compare with it the advantages afforded by the despotic rule of an irresponsible tyrant; and Alexander was well calculated to assume the character of such a magistrate. He had received the ensigns of usurped authority by even a less respectable means than the Sforzas of Milan, and the other princes whom popular favour, misguided and seduced, had raised to sovereign rank in Italy. Foreign arms and foreign interests had made him a monarch of reluctant subjects, and rendered requisite, for the maintenance of power thus obtained, the continued presence of the force by which it had been gained. Alexander, not satisfied however with placing a mercenary troop as a guard upon the citizens, insulted them by giving the command of his prætorians to Alexander Vitelli, remarkable as the enemy of republican institutions, and sworn to the hatred of Florence and the Florentines. It may be remembered that the father of this Vitelli had been executed by order of the Signory for his miscarriage in the affair of Pisa.* Nor did this suffice to quiet the fears of the jealous and cowardly tyrant. Availing himself of the law by which the citizens had been disarmed, he declared his resolution to enforce its execution with unceasing care, and to punish, with unmitigated severity, the slightest departure from its injunctions. But while it pleased him thus to play the tyrant with his subjects; a people, who, resigning their liberties and the controul of their own affairs, had entrusted to his care and to his virtue the charge of their interests and happiness, he loaded with privileges the bands which he had introduced to awe the ancient sovereigns of the land into a troubled submission. The license of these troops, protected by the royal favour, soon exasperated even the warmest friends of the prince; and a heavy retribution came upon those, who,

* See page 145.

in the hope of personal advancement, had sacrificed the rights and immunities of their countrymen. Guicciardini, Valori, and Strozzi, not trusted by him who had most profited by their treason to Florence, found themselves postponed to the troops on which their master rested his hopes in case of a popular movement; and the cardinals, who, as dignitaries of the hierarchy, had naturally sided with Clement in the war and crusade against the freedom of Tuscany, now eagerly enlisted on the side of the enemies of Alexander. At the head of this opposition was the second favourite of the pope, the cardinal Hippolito. In the midst of so many enemies, who gratified the vanity of the duke while they excited his secret fears, that prince relied upon his hired soldiers, and endeavoured to bind them faster to his interests by conceding to military license little less than a perfect impunity. Yet even while he trusted to these interested swords, he did not wholly neglect all other means of safety; he erected near the gates an almost impregnable fortress in case of sudden tumult, and a vessel, stationed at the mouth of the Arno, waited his commands to save him by a more ignoble means if the arms of his mercenaries should prove too few, or the walls of his fortress too weak, to sustain the opposition which he might one day expect as a consequence of his unbridled tyranny.

With the exception of the Roman pontiff, Alexander had in his own family (for such we must consider the Medici) scarcely a friend; but Clement seemed indeed to grow to him as his former adherents fell from his side. Thus protected, the bastard prince might scorn the malice of his disappointed friends, or tread with the semblance of contempt upon the remonstrances, complaints, or threats, of his less questionably disinterested enemies. This shield was fortunately destined not to serve him long. Clement had lived, it is true, so long, that now his death could scarcely be of any avail to the interests of his country

or of humanity. But, though too late to benefit Florence, or Italy, or the world, the death of this feeble potentate, unhappily more mischievous in his feebleness than the most ambitious of his predecessors in the strength of their power, might yet occur too early for the safety of the newly established despot of Florence. The terrors of a guilty life, now drawing to a close, if not the remorse of conscience, presaged to the pernicious priest the rapid approach of his last moments. On the 25th of September the violence of disease accomplished the desirable end, and Clement on that day was withdrawn by death from the scene of his iniquity and guilty triumphs.*

CHAPTER VII.

Death of Alexander and Accession of Cosimo.

THE death of Clement, though not an unexpected, was an overwhelming, blow to Alexander, as it left

* "This pope was exalted from a low degree with wonderful felicity to the pontificate, but in it he experienced a great variety of fortune, though, upon the balance, his bad fortune greatly outweighed the good. For what felicity can compare with the infelicity of his imprisonment, his having seen the sackage of Rome with such horrible ravages, and his being the cause of so great a ruin to his own country? He died hated by the court, suspected by the princes, and with the character of being rather of a morose and disagreeable than of a pleasant and affable temper, being reputed avaricious, hardly to be trusted, and naturally averse from doing a kindness. Wherefore, though in his pontificate he created one-and-thirty cardinals, he created not one for his own satisfaction, but, on the contrary, was always in a manner necessitated to it, except the cardinal de' Medici, whom he created rather at the solicitations of others, than of his own spontaneous choice, at a time when he laboured under a dangerous disorder, and if he had died would have left those who belonged to him beggars, and destitute of all relief. He was, however, very grave and circumspect in his actions, much master of himself, and of a very great capacity, if timidity had not frequently corrupted his judgment."—*Guicciardini.*

him exposed to the ambition and dangerous popularity of the cardinal Hippolito. Disappointed in the hopes which he had built upon the supposed preference of the pontiff, this fascinating ecclesiastic now turned himself to nobler thoughts, and hoped to earn upon the gratitude of his fellows a better title to fame than he could have founded on the subversion of their liberties and the establishment of a throne upon their ruins. In this kinsman, therefore, the duke of Florence encountered a powerful antagonist. All the discontented partizans of the Medici flocked to his little court at Rome, and lent themselves with eagerness to the plans maturing for the restoration of the republic through the influence of Hippolito. Conspiracy and secret force had proved too doubtful in the issue, and too generally unsuccessful, even while Florence had yet the protection of her old constitution, to offer now a prospect of success to the malcontents. Finding themselves, moreover, safe in the distance which separated them from the jurisdiction of the tyrant, they resolved to make their hostility at once open and decisive. Three principal citizens were despatched to Charles, to lay before him the grievances of the state, and to entreat that he would not continue his protection to one, who, under the shadow of his favour, had introduced a tyranny more oppressive than any under which the most ill-governed states of Italy had ever been reduced to groan. In conclusion they urged the imperial faith engaged for the performance of the articles of capitulation, on the strength of which the citizens had surrendered themselves to the soldiers and allies of his majesty.

At the moment of the arrival of this deputation, Charles was preparing for his famous expedition against the Moors of Barbary. Amazed, however, at the recital of the enormities which the complainants charged upon Alexander, and shocked at the atrocities from which even his nature revolted, he engaged to

lend a formal hearing to the parties on his return from Africa. The arrival of this moment was anxiously awaited by the banished Florentines, and not less solicitously, though with less open desire, by the people of Florence. Hippolito was chosen to advocate the common cause; and it is possible, that had he been heard, the fate of this last solemn and desperate appeal might have been widely different. But Alexander had too much at stake to suffer the cause of his adversaries to be argued by so eloquent and popular an advocate. Charles, as he but too well knew, had stipulated for the restoration of the Medici; but the claims of the cardinal to represent that family were certainly not more feeble than those of the actual representative, while the popular preference, if not the popular favour, made him certainly more proper as a sovereign to reconcile the spirit of a people not yet accustomed to obey, and never well disposed to kingly rule. He trembled, therefore, when Charles declared from Naples that he would determine the disputed question; but more, when his kinsman, supported by the openly acknowledged favour of the most respectable individuals and families, put himself on the way to advocate the cause of the city before the august and powerful judge, in whose decision was placed irrevocably the destiny of the contending parties. While all who were interested in the settlement of this question, decisive of the fate of liberty within the Alps, the enemies of Alexander, exulting in the almost assured success of Hippolito's advocacy, and his interested partizans trembling for the support of his menaced throne, the sudden death of the cardinal was announced to the wonder or consternation of all who with breathless anxiety had watched the progress of this fraternal dispute. The cardinal had arrived at Itri on the way to Naples from Rome, when the treachery of Alexander overtook him. Often before, the fears of Hippolito's interest with his dissatisfied subjects, had suggested to

the guilty mind of the prince the necessity of freeing himself from so formidable a rival; and the most illustrious poet of his day, the herald, as it were, of the still greater Ariosto, Francesco Berni, was made to suffer the penalty of a virtue that should have placed him above the dependence of such a prince as Alexander. Enjoying the friendship of Hippolito for his talents and the fame which they had acquired, the poet seemed a proper person to be employed as an instrument of his master's jealousies, and accordingly the duke entrusted to him the design of assassinating his kinsman, and charged him as a dependent with the whole execution. The humble attendant of a court, degraded and stained like that of Alexander by all the crimes that lust and avarice and fear can prompt, would hardly be unprepared for such a proposal; and it requires even a stretch of credulity to believe that his reluctance and refusal to perform the office proceeded alone from virtuous abhorrence, or from an honest indignation at the attempt to convert his necessary dependence into the service of a hired assassin. He did, however, refuse to participate in the murder; and the terror of Alexander, who thus unexpectedly found himself at the mercy of his dependent, combined with his displeasure at so unexpected a refusal to seal the fate of his servant no less certainly than that of the first object of his fear and hate. The duke soon after found a readier instrument; both his victims were despatched to satisfy at once his ambition of a throne, his desire of vengeance, and his thirst of blood. In the same fate were involved the friends of the cardinal, Dante di Castiglione, and Berlinghiero Berlinghieri, strenuous members of the opposition; but the better fortune of the less deserving Filippo Strozzi saved him from a similar destiny.

The death of Hippolito had not the effect, perhaps, anticipated by his murderer, as the appeal for his removal was not conducted with any diminution of energy, or any inclination towards a compromise.

In all the defections occasioned by the enormities of Alexander's rule, there yet were those whom fear or avarice and the vanity of official dignity still held to his interest; and the warmest advocates of his oppressive government found themselves in many instances, opposed in this dispute to personal friends or the nearer relations of blood. Thus Guicciardini, Acciajuoli, and Bartolommeo Valori, were now to meet as opponents their former colleagues of the Medicean party; and Matteo Strozzi was not ashamed to sustain the pretensions of a prince, whose disregard of female modesty and infamous attempts upon the chastity of a member of that unscrupulous family, had detached from his cause at length the mercenary and selfish Filippo.

When Charles consented to unite his daughter to the favourite of Clement, he committed himself in a great measure to the support of his government and dynasty in spite of all opposition; and when, therefore, this well-grounded hostility arose, and displayed itself in a manner so peremptory and resolved, he found himself in a condition requiring, even from his absolute power, a cautious if not an impartial procedure. While then the graveness of the repeated charges of incapacity against Alexander compelled him at least to the semblance of investigation and reflection, the ministers of his court, deceived by his assumption of the office of judge, and by his protestations of a resolution to decide without affection or favour, declared themselves almost unanimously on the side of the petitioners, and urged the deposition of the feeble and dissolute prince. The emperor still continued to doubt, or at least to wear the appearance of doubt; and Alexander, sinking under the weight of his self-convictions, was about to accomplish the wishes of his enemies by a voluntary abandonment of the dispute, and a clandestine withdrawal from the bar and jurisdiction of his too partial judge. For a single moment the fate of Florence now seemed

again to tremble in an equal scale; and had the fears of the accused and conscience-stricken tyrant prevailed, that city, though perhaps she never could have gained her former state, or restored to her citizens the government of their days of power and glory, must yet have escaped the degrading rule of the Medici; a family hateful in their rise and despicable in their end. But Guicciardini had not yet filled the measure of his infamy in the long history of his subservient baseness. He had sustained the party of the bastard favourites of Clement in their rise, and now the contempt of his fellows, which was only not sufficiently strong to extinguish their detestation, rendered the fall of the usurper's throne an event of danger, or pregnant rather with assured destruction to its slave and parasite. He heard, therefore, with consternation the project of his master to abandon the contested field, and leave the city once again in the hands of the people to resume themselves the government, or to exalt to the vacant throne of their sovereignty a family less connected with the causes of their fall from liberty, and less execrable for the meanness of vice and the atrocity of crime. Guicciardini was a wily politician; he read the heart of Charles, and laid it as an open book before the vacillating prince. To his counsels, therefore, all that Florence was yet to suffer, is to be ascribed; Alexander remained for the sentence of the emperor; and in spite of the earnest and substantiated accusations of Nardi, the republican historian of those days of Italy's disgrace and fall, in spite of the prayers and tears of Florence, that sentence confirmed the rule of Alexander, and justified the tyranny with which he had oppressed the subjects submitted to his paternal care. In palliation of this bitter decree, it was ordained that all who had been exiled for opinion's sake, and all whom the caprice of Alexander had held in banishment, should be recalled with full oblivion of the past and perfect security for the future.

It was not for those who had distinguished themselves by an unequalled self-devotion in the last conflict waged by their country, to accept, as an accorded grace, the privilege of returning to her walls; still less, perhaps, could the more recent and more personal enemies of the now doubly irresponsible autocrat consent, under any assurance of safety, to place themselves within the reach of the eager grasp of his offended vanity and ambition. Many of both these classes, deprived, under the name of confiscation, of their possessions, and destitute of the necessaries of life, were labouring under all the afflictions of unexpected want. Unacquainted with poverty, they now found themselves reduced to its severest privations; but none of the devoted leaders for a moment thought of purchasing the license to return as pardoned culprits to their native city, by the sacrifice of the new and lofty dignity acquired as the last champions of her extinguished rights; and Charles cannot but have envied the elevation of soul which rejected his degrading boon, and taught him the feebleness of his despotic power. Their reply or remonstrance, for it might be considered in either light, couched in the most resolute terms, began by stating that the appellants had not requested instruction from his imperial majesty as to the manner in which they should obey the duke Alexander, nor yet to implore his forgiveness for having justly laboured to recover and maintain the liberty of their country; that they had not invoked his aid to return them as slaves to those walls from which they had departed freemen, and for the sake and love of freedom; nor yet for the preservation of their goods. "*But*," continued the memorial, "*we have resorted to the foot of your majesty's throne in reliance upon your justice and faith, expecting you to restore us to our country, and our country to that entire and true liberty which the ministers of your authority in your name have engaged to secure to us, and which your truth is therefore pledged to sustain. We know*,

therefore, of no other reply to your majesty's decree, than to assure you that we have resolved to live free, and to die as we have lived; beseeching your majesty yet once again to rescue our unhappy city from the unjust and cruel yoke which oppresses her."

Whatever effect this honest remonstrance might under other circumstances have produced, the actual need of Charles would not allow him at that moment to forget the statesman in the judge. The war with Francis was about to be renewed in Lombardy; a dependent in Tuscany, on whom he might rely and whom he might command, became little less than necessary to his success in the impending contest; and Alexander's unpopularity and absolute dependence upon the imperial arms, combined to render him the fittest and least dangerous individual to whom the emperor could entrust a sovereignty which differed so little from a viceroyalty, and which was to be his great support against the liberals who would flock to the standard of his adversary. He therefore hastened to conclude the long-protracted nuptials of his daughter Margaret of Austria and Alexander de' Medici.

If this unbridled voluptuary had formerly indulged in all the pleasures which despotic power could cover with the shield of impunity and a corrupted heart enjoy, it now appeared that new vices were to be discovered for the sake alone of glutting the morbid appetite of the sickly sensualist. The terrified parents who sought the sanctuary of the cloister and the altar as a last protection for the virtue of their daughters, were awaked from a momentary security to hear their shrieks or witness their disgrace, and to find the altars at which they had been willing to sacrifice the youth of their children converted into a scene of revelry or violence. The principal minister of Alexander's pleasures was his cousin Lorenzino, the eldest of the Medici, out of the line of the reigning prince, and consequently heir presumptive to the ducal throne. He

was descended from Lorenzo, the brother of Cosimo, and son of Giovanni, the founder of the Medicean power, and head of the elder line of his offspring, as Cosimo, the son of Giovanni, had been of the younger. In all the excesses of Alexander, this ready attendant appeared at once the participator, and in most, the minister; nor could the Florentines distinguish between the sovereign and his satellite in the ceaseless debauches at which they sickened with disgust even while they trembled with fear. One recommendation there was, however, of Lorenzino in the eyes of his countrymen, which elevated him above the unredeemable detestation of the duke. A love of letters, and a distinguished success in their cultivation, which seemed indeed incompatible with his career of lewdness and vice, acquired for the son of Gian Francesco a partial respect, and may have appeared at least to indicate a mind not totally perverted and a heart not totally corrupt. Day by day this comparative regard diminished, and exposed the servile minister of courtly vice to a hatred no less deep than that which every heart had long cherished in silence for the ruler of their fortunes and arbiter of their lives. Lorenzino perceived the dangerous ground on which he stood; he would have retreated from the verge of the precipice to which he had carelessly approached, but he had rushed with too headlong an impetuosity to the brink, and too late had discovered the perilous condition, from which there was no longer either safety in boldness or possibility of retreat. Of this he did not become immediately persuaded; and it would almost seem that, though the hour of Florence and her freedom had been suffered to pass, yet that a divine or an ordaining fate had destined the instrument of Alexander's blackest crimes as the instrument also of his fall. The jealous suspicions, indeed, of the prince would hardly have permitted another than Lorenzino to possess himself of the means of offence against his person; and nothing probably, ex-

cept the prompt and unquestioning subserviency of Lorenzino, had recommended him in such a manner to the confidence of the cautious prince.

It is not possible to decide with certainty on the motives of this singular individual in the conduct which has rendered him famous or infamous to all the readers of his country's annals through all the generations of her history. His previous life was a tissue of follies, meanness, and crime; the most striking incident of his life presents him in the exalted character of the most noble Roman, and challenges an admiration for a sacrifice greater than that which Brutus was permitted to offer. Perhaps, however, had the libidinous passions of Alexander been content to spare the family of his kinsman, Lorenzino might never have aspired to become the liberator of his country; and it is more than possible, that the jealousy of female honour, about to be violated in his family, excited first in his bosom that love of liberty, the loss of which he did not feel while the usurper's favour spared the sacred altar of his domestic rights.

Lorenzino was at this time but twenty-two years of age; and if at such an era of his life, awaking from his dream of pleasures, he became acquainted with the nobler end for which he had been endowed with energy of mind and lofty intellect, we may excuse the errors of a youth accustomed to unrestricted license, and fostered by the hand of power in the career of juvenile dissipation. In the midst even of these early excesses, a circumstance occurred, which, though enumerated as one of them by his enemies, may serve to show that even then his mind was not wholly subdued by the influence of an over-indulgence in forbidden pleasures; and that the detestation of tyranny, which afterwards became his boast, and constitutes even now the basis of his fame or the ground of his reproach, was not utterly silent in his breast. His residence in Florence was caused by his banishment from

Rome, in which city he had been guilty of a singular outrage, in breaking from the ancient statues the heads of the emperors and of others which adorned the triumphal arches of the imperial conquerors, Trajan and Constantine.

The mother of this youth, still young herself, had a sister of exceeding beauty, by many years her junior. After a guilty triumph over all the females of inferior rank whose charms had seemed to make them a desirable conquest, the duke Alexander was still dissatisfied, unless the virtue of this fair relative of his friend and minister were also made to yield before his hitherto irresistible addresses. But the wife of Leonardo Ginori was deaf to his insinuations and inexorable to his prayers, till, wounded by her resistance and urged by the difficulty of the achievement, he resolved to trust himself, even in an affair so delicate, to the address of Lorenzino. The proposal did not startle as it might have been expected to do. Alexander found in Lorenzino the same willing servant, and rested secure that he should accomplish this last object of his desire. He was compelled, however, to delay, for a longer term than he had expected, the gratification of his infamous passion. At last his faithful agent appeared with the almost unexpected but welcome intelligence that the long-resisting virtue of the beautiful Ginori had yielded to the merit of her suitor and the zealous intercession of its advocate. Alexander abandoned himself to the fidelity of his friend, and felt now satisfied that he had not imprudently confided to his keeping so jealous a charge. The moment for the accomplishment of their unworthy purpose was fixed, and the house of Lorenzino was appointed for the scene of their guilty triumph, to protect the reputation of the frail but not abandoned wife. In these arrangements there was nothing to excite suspicion, for the house of Lorenzino had often been the chosen scene before of Alexander's dissolute enjoyments; nor when, indeed, the destined

victims of his lewdness had sustained unshaken all his passionate prayers, had those walls been unconscious of the shrieks and groans of violated chastity and virtue yielding to force.

The designated night at length arrived, and Alexander found himself at the appointed hour on the spot which had witnessed so many times his criminal indulgences. He was accompanied, as usual, by his friend, the master of the dwelling. All the day had been spent in revelry, and the night overtook the lover wearied with its pleasing fatigues. He threw himself, therefore, upon the bed, and consigning his sword to the charge of his watchful attendant, abandoned himself to sleep till Lorenzino should arouse him for completion of his long delayed and late accomplished victory. While thus at the mercy of his relative, the smothered indignation of that agent of his crimes at last burst forth for their common destruction. Lorenzino was not a coward, but he had resolved the death of his country's oppressor, if not the regeneration of that country herself. With this resolution he did not choose to venture on his unassisted arm the success of his design; and though not unwilling to bear his part, he was still more resolute to see the full accomplishment of his plot; he did not fear to encounter personal danger, but he knew his own deficiency of physical strength; from which indeed, made manifest in an unimposing stature and a feeble frame, his name had received its diminutive adjunct. But though he had judged it expedient and even necessary to associate with himself some assistant for the execution of his purpose, he did not admit him to the least participation in his intention. He had bound to his interest a certain Michele del Tavolaccino, better known among his countrymen by the appellation of Scoroncolo, a common and convicted bravo, for whom Lorenzino had succeeded in obtaining a pardon, and who had attached himself as a useful retainer from that moment to the

person of his benefactor. When first, therefore, the thought of delivering Florence from her degrading oppression had entered the mind of Lorenzino, he applied to this person, communicating to him only so much of his design as might enable him to assure himself that the services of Scoroncolo might be depended on, and that his arm was ready in the service of his patron against any one on whom it might be necessary to employ it. Before the arrival of Alexander on this fatal evening, the determined conspirator, if so he could be called whose only accomplices were his own counsels and his resolute purpose, had introduced his almost unconscious assistant into a chamber adjoining that which was to be the scene of the intended tragedy. No sooner had he withdrawn the light from the duke's apartment, than he hastened to that in which Scoroncolo had been concealed. It was now necessary to prepare the savage in some measure for the part to be performed. Lorenzino therefore told him, that the enemy with whom he had brought him to deal was then sleeping in the adjoining room; that the lights had been withdrawn, and that the blow must be made sure, because the interests most dear and nearest to him required the death of that individual; but most of all, because his rank and power were such as to render an abortive attempt upon his person inevitable destruction to those by whom it had been devised or made. Nothing daunted, the bravo declared that he was ready, and that he would answer for his aim; that as for the rank of the victim, he was not the less willing and prepared if it should be duke Alexander himself. "You have named him," exclaimed Lorenzino, "it is the duke;" and they entered the chamber of the bed of death. Softly, and almost in the dark, they proceeded towards the side of the apartment to which they were guided by the breathings of the duke, Lorenzino leading the way and Scoroncolo following close upon his steps. "Do you

sleep, my lord?" said he, in the act of drawing the curtain of the bed, and following up the interrogatory by a blow with his sword, which from a stronger arm would have proved instantly fatal. The athletic form of the duke, however, resisted the blow. He raised himself on his body, and, grappling with his assailant, rolled confusedly with him on the bed now deluged with blood. His sword had been removed; and even if he could have obtained possession of it in that moment, the caution of Lorenzino had rendered it useless by fastening it with the belt to the scabbard. In the fury of his unexpected defence, the wounded prince exclaimed aloud for help; but a just retribution rendered vain his hope. The inmates of that house had been too long accustomed to the cries of the victims of his lust to heed the stifled screams that now issued from the chamber of death. Abandoned, therefore, to a just fate by those whom he had taught to hear unmoved the shrieks of human agony, the wretched sovereign found himself alone in the hands of those whom a double necessity now impelled to his murder, and who had themselves no safety but in his death. For some time the struggle between the wounded prince and his assassin appeared no less uncertain than desperate. In the obscurity and in the confusion of their struggle, it was nearly impossible for Scoroncolo to lend the least assistance to his patron without incurring the imminent danger of mistaking in the blow his person for that of the duke. Seizing at last, however, the feet of the latter, and directing his aim by continuing his hand along the body till he should attain a vital part, he succeeded in striking his dagger into the throat of the unhappy prince, who, then relaxing his hold upon Lorenzino, abandoned himself to death.

Had Lorenzino been able to provide as well for the events to succeed upon the execution of his plan, as for the execution itself, he might have seated himself without obstruction on the ducal throne, or restored to

the city its long lost liberty. For these, however, he appears to have made no preparation, and his only thought, upon despatching the tyrant, was to rescue himself from the possible consequences of the murder. The resolution which he took of abandoning the city, though it may argue little for his prudence, is at least a refutation of the charge of ambition so industriously raised against him by the partizans of the craftier politician who was destined to reap the fruit of his successful adventure.

The body of the murdered prince was left upon the bed on which it had fallen, and the curtains being drawn closely around it, the door was locked, that no one might become aware of the occurrence until Lorenzino should have disposed of himself and made provision for his personal safety. To this end, having supplied himself with all the money which he could command, and related to the steward of his house the transaction of the night, with a charge to divulge it gradually in the morning among those who were known to be the friends of liberty, he departed with Scoroncolo, and took the road to Bologna on his way to Venice, where he had purposed to abide the issue of the revolution which his own act had caused. At Bologna he communicated to Silvestro Aldobrandini, one of the Florentine exiles, the death of Alexander; but so improbable did such an event appear to his hearer, so impossible, in the manner in which it was related to have occurred, that Lorenzino could not obtain credit from his hearer, and departed from Bologna, leaving Aldobrandini still unwilling to believe. At Venice, Filippo Strozzi was for a long time equally incredulous, until at last, persuaded by the reiterated assurances of Lorenzino, he cast himself about his neck and hailed him as the Brutus of the renovated republic. Such were the sentiments of all the liberal party in regard to the assassination of the duke of Florence; and such, had that party proved ultimately successful,

would have been the common opinion of Lorenzino, and the admiration with which the memory of his achievement would have been given to posterity. In the first moments of the general confusion which attended the publication of Alexander's death, it was natural that the conduct of the protagonist in the tragedy should be variously considered and variously represented. We know, however, that many of those who were by no means distinguished as political partizans, and who had early manifested a profound disgust for the juvenile excesses of Lorenzino, now changing their views and opinions, united in the popular applause, and acknowledged the ancient Roman in the modern conspirator.*

On the morning after the departure of Lorenzino, the cardinal Cibo, first minister of Alexander, was informed that the duke had been during the whole night absent from his apartments. For some time this information caused but little suspicion, the ordinary indulgences of that prince being too familiar to his ministers. But when the news of Lorenzino's hasty and midnight departure was also rumoured through the city, the crafty prelate began indeed to suspect that something more than usual had occurred, which might possibly give rise to a new condition of affairs in Florence. Apprehensive, however, that should the truth

* The poet Molza, after having publicly reprobated the former conduct of Lorenzino, moved by his performance of this single act, appears to have considered all the past but as a part essential to the lofty character which he now assumed, and to have acknowledged the error of his former judgment. It may be, indeed, that such was the evil of the times as to render the assumption of his former habits necessary to the success of a preconceived design for the liberation of his country. This, however, is hardly supposable. The following is the epigram of Molza commemorating the event, in which allusion is made to the anecdote of the Roman statues mentioned in the text. See page 269.

"Invisum ferro Laurens dum percutit hostem
Quod premeret patriæ libera colla suæ;
Te ne hic nunc, inquit, patiar, qui ferre tyrannos
Vix olim Romæ marmoreos potui?"

of his worst fears be realized and become known to the people, a sudden rising might take place to the subversion of the recently established order of things, he caused it to be reported that Alexander was still reposing, having been engaged in various occupations during the night, while at the same time he secretly despatched a messenger to Alexander Vitelli, requesting him to repair with his soldiers immediately to the city. The whole day passed in this uncertainty, and only in the evening, when he was assured of the advance of Vitelli, did the cardinal venture to enter the dwelling of Lorenzino, and examine the fatal chamber in which the body of the murdered prince still lay, and which was discovered stiffened and swimming in its blood. Upon beholding this spectacle, and finding his suspicions thus dreadfully verified, the cardinal congratulated himself upon the prudence with which he had concealed his fears, and prepared, in the ignorance of the populace, to rivet anew their chains thus suddenly broken.

But while preparations were thus making by the party hostile to liberty, the golden opportunity was being suffered to pass by those who would willingly have sacrificed every personal interest for its restoration. Zeffi, the steward of Lorenzino, had been mindful of his master's instructions, and spread in secret among the enemies of Alexander the tidings of his death. Unfortunately the intimacy of the relatives, and their common reputation for dissipation and duplicity, now operated so as to render extremely suspicious the information of Zeffi; and the confidential manner in which it was communicated, excited in all to whom it was given immediate suspicion of a treachery intended to entrap and to deliver them to the vengeance of the duke. As the rumour continued to gather strength, and as those who rejoiced in the liberation of the city began to discover themselves, and at last to cast off the reserve of fear, they found that they had too late been convinced;

for, just as they believed themselves sufficiently strong to prevail in the city and in the councils against the friends and partizans of the new government, the arrival of Vitelli and his foreign soldiery made manifest that the last chance had abandoned their cause.

Meanwhile the Forty-Eight assembled in the palace of the Medici, under the presidency of the cardinal Cibo. In this council, formed as it was of those who had come into power under the recent government, and who were dependent upon its maintenance for the continuance of their dignities, though far the greatest part were only intent upon supplying the place of Alexander without the slightest thought of change in the constitution of the state, there yet were some who dared to raise their voices for the republic, and to vindicate the rights of the people as fortune had taken the choice of their sovereign out of the hands of the emperor. While some proposed to elevate the natural son of the late duke to the throne of his father, and others advocated the succession of Cosimo, the son of the illustrious captain of the *Black Bands*, Giovanni de' Medici, the voice of Palla Rucellai was boldly raised for the support of the people and the restoration of the commonwealth. "At least," said he, "let us adopt no resolution while so many illustrious citizens, either exiles or emigrants, who have equal right with us to decide in this matter, are unable to participate in our deliberations." A majority of the senators were manifestly inclined to the opinions of Rucellai; but yet again the evil destiny of Guicciardini, and his associates Acciajuoli, Vettori, and Matteo Strozzi, condemned them unhappily to wrest from their countrymen the illusory hope of political regeneration. The dreadful weight of the public odium, brought upon their heads by their repeated treasons, stood now in terrible prospect before them. They did not dare to contemplate the possible effects of the recovery of their power by the people, and of the ven-

geance of their violated laws; for them, therefore, there appeared no safety but in the support of the ducal authority; and the fear of these pernicious counsellors outweighed, with a majority of the senate, the rising love of their primeval liberty and the dictates of a disinterested patriotism. Between the desires and the irresolution of the assembly, it was found impossible to come to any decision; and Guicciardini succeeded in extorting or persuading a resolve to defer for the space of three days the final action of the council on the important point of adjusting the government.

No sooner had the veteran politician obtained this grant of time, than, convening a more secret meeting of his friends, he set himself about disposing of the general concerns in such a manner as to render a subsequent assembling of the council nugatory for the purpose of deliberation, or, indeed, for any purpose, unless it were to ratify the proceedings of this unprincipled caucus. It was there determined that Cosimo, who had been invited to Florence to take part in the proceedings, should be entrusted with the supreme controul and governance of the state under various restrictions, not intended, indeed, to protect the citizens, but to make the sovereign dependent in a greater degree upon his ministers. Cosimo had spent his life till this period in retirement; nor had he manifested a disposition to engage in any of the political contests which seemed to offer to the ambitious and enterprising the reasonable promise of a successful career. Inferring from this character of Cosimo the most flattering hopes of tractable tutelage upon his part, and of exercising a perfect controul upon his own, Guicciardini had been mainly instrumental in procuring the election of the unassuming prince.

On the next assembling of the senate, which took place on the 9th of January, 1537, before the day assigned, Vitelli was stationed with his troop around the palace, and disturbed the deliberations within by bois-

terous cries of *Live the Duke and the Medici.* The import of those cries was well understood by the few republicans who had delivered their sentiments in opposition to the continuance of the ducal power. Without resolution to brave the mercenaries, they yet delayed, and hesitated, and refused to resolve, when Vitelli despatched a messenger to bid them hasten, as his soldiers were impatient and would not longer be held in check. To this insidious and contemptuous threat, the senate replied by electing Cosimo with an overwhelming majority.

To fasten the new sovereign upon the people, nothing now was wanted but the imperial sanction, and this was but a short time delayed. On the 21st of June, Ferdinand de Silva, ambassador of Cæsar, produced to the senate a decree of the emperor, bearing date as far back as the 28th of February, in which the race of Piero Francesco de' Medici was forever set aside, and that of Cosimo substituted in its place as legitimately succeeding to the extinct line of Alexander. Such was the election of Cosimo, and such the end of the miserable ambition of Clement for his bastard favourites. For them he had sacrificed the liberty of Florence and the independence of Italy; for them he had restored to the German emperors that supremacy in the Peninsula which it had cost so much blood to shake off in the time of the first Frederic and his greater grandson; for them he had been content to make his name a reproach and a scorn to his countrymen and to posterity; but posterity, indeed, was soon to be revenged. A rebellious subject had undertaken its vengeance, and the empire of the Church, which in its perversion had mingled in the differences of temporal empires, and mingled in them only for the overthrow of all that religion and religious power should protect, now shook before the denunciations of an apostate monk; and the proud prelate, who had brought such ruin on his country for the vanity of the name of pow-

er, was stripped of the best portion of its real prerogatives by the bold resolution and cool intrepidity of Martin Luther.

In spite of the treachery of Guicciardini and his associates, with their ready prostration to the shadow of power, and the imposing aid of the emperor, the exiles did not abandon all hope of being able to overthrow the throne of Cosimo; and Bartolommeo Valori, in connexion with Strozzi, former partizans of the Medici, now lent themselves, with all the eagerness of revenge, to break the sceptre which they had been foremost to place in the hands of him who had but recently wielded it so cruelly and disgracefully. Unfit, however, to contend with the cunning of Cosimo, and suited only to the servile parts which they had been accustomed to enact, these were not the men on whom the friends of civil liberty could safely repose; a well devised manœuvre of the duke completely disconcerted their measures, and left the most authoritative of their party prisoners in the hands of their inexorable enemy. As prisoners of war, and pertaining to those by whom they had been captured, these unfortunates might hope to escape the eager fury of the duke; and those who had fallen into possession of the Spanish soldiery had cause indeed for congratulation. The Italians readily sold their captives to Cosimo, who was willing, by the payment of any sum, to save himself all future apprehension in causing the execution of such of his enemies as he could thus get within his grasp. Nor could the prompt destruction of his enemies suffice to satiate the thirst of vengeance in his soul; while he might have terminated all his fears at once and all their sufferings, he rather chose to lengthen both, and to condemn to execution, day by day, so many only of his victims as might glut his appetite nor yet exhaust his store. For four days the proscription and massacre continued, when the rage of the indignant populace, who seemed to shake with threatening

looks their chains, compelled his yet unsated hunger to forego its savage feast. Among those, however, who had perished, was Nicolo Macchiavelli, a son of the historian, whom the lessons and example of his father had made a republican and a patriot. No less than three of the name of Valori were at the same time offered up as victims to Cosimo's revenge or cruel policy. Bartolommeo himself, the head of the family, was sentenced to suffer on the 20th of August, as if to stifle the public sympathy, and give his death the appearance of an act of public justice—the anniversary of that day upon which, but seven years before, he had delivered his country in chains to the tyranny of the Medici. Filippo Strozzi was still required to fill the measure of Cosimo's triumph. For a long time Vitelli had refused to deliver him up; demanding at the same time for his doubtful protection no inconsiderable tax upon the large possessions of his prisoner. Unable to resist the pressing instances of the duke, the emperor, however, was induced at last to withdraw that protection which Vitelli under his authority had afforded the illustrious citizen. An order was accordingly sent for his exposure to the question. But Strozzi had resolved to atone by his last act for some of the transgressions of the meridian of his life. Apprehensive that the weakness of his nature and the infirmities of age might wring from his lips a charge to implicate his friends, and offer up new sacrifices to the blood-stained throne about to be established by the execrable oppressors of his country, no sooner did he hear of the arrival of the imperial edict, than, fixing his mind on the misfortunes of that country, and connecting them with his own and with the still unextinguishable hope of her future emancipation, in the moment of inflicting a fatal wound upon his person, he exclaimed, *Exoriare aliquis nostris ex ossibus ultor!* Thus did the oppressions of Cosimo convert into patriots the least disinterested of the Florentines, and throw the

least affectionate of the children of Florence again into the bosom of their country.

Liberated in this manner from all fear of his enemies, Cosimo was now in a condition to free himself from the more troublesome, if not more dangerous, burthen of his friends. The scaffold had freed him from the former, and he would not have been sorry to rid himself by that or by any other means, of the oppressive debt by which he felt himself bound to the latter. Those to whom he owed in a great degree his elevation to the ducal throne, were those, of course, to whom he felt himself most bound, and whom first he would naturally desire to remove. Perhaps the cardinal Cibo might claim to have rendered him the most essential service, or, at least, to have performed the most useful part in the contrivances by which the people had been prevented from restoring the popular government on the death of Alexander; nor was it long before Cosimo found himself in a state to teach the unprincipled ecclesiastic the useful lesson of princely gratitude, by banishing him from the city in which he had hoped to perform so conspicuous a part in the government. Alexander Vitelli too had not only participated largely in conferring upon Cosimo the sovereign power, but he had in that participation manifested a disposition and a power to controul the affairs of the city, which could not be agreeable to the city's new and jealous lord. His removal, therefore, became an object of desire and of primary importance to the duke of his own creating; and, after a long entreaty, the emperor thought it expedient to grant the prayer of his faithful ally, and to supersede the long-tried leader of the imperial troops. Thus did Cosimo in a second instance pay his debt of gratitude. Guicciardini, Francesco Vettori, Acciajuoli, and Matteo Strozzi, still remained. Detested and despised by their fellow-subjects, they looked to Cosimo, and to that influence which he would allow them to exercise in the state, as a refuge

24*

from the persecution of that contempt and hate which they knew they had merited. But Cosimo had bent his mind upon enjoying the throne and state to which they had exalted him; nor was it long before they found that, least of all his subjects, would Cosimo allow them to participate in his councils, not to say in his authority. Denied the hard-earned reward of their public treachery one after the other, these illustrious culprits became unable to endure the disappointment of their hopes, and the loss of all that they had promised themselves as a support under the heavy burthen of opprobrium, which they too well knew could only be lightened by that power which could shut the public voice within the lips of the indignant victims of their lust of place. Before the year 1540, the mortification of disgrace had rid the jealous duke of all these troublesome remembrances; and then, when he recollected that he had no longer a friend, he felt that he had entered upon his reign.

Lorenzino had yet escaped; but the instant return of Florence to the bondage from which he had vainly desired and endeavoured to deliver her, not only denied him the high reward of glory which he had anticipated, but rendered him an outcast and a proscript where he had looked to find himself a hero and a deliverer. For ten years a wanderer over Europe, he found himself compelled to seek an asylum at the courts of those whose prerogatives he had attached, and whose common feelings he had enlisted in a common cause by the assassination of Alexander. Against the price which a public proclamation had put upon his head in Tuscany, Lorenzino could not murmur, nor had he reason to fear its consequences; but the hired dagger, which was sure to find impunity even in those countries to which the power of Cosimo's proclamation could not reach, and which had offered ostensibly the protection of their laws to all who were willing to reside in quiet and order beneath their influ-

ence—this it was that Lorenzino felt himself compelled to guard against, and against which he had in reality no defence but in his own vigilance and courage. From Venice he removed to Turkey, in which country the resolute murderer of Julian de' Medici, in the time of the Medici, had sought refuge and security in vain. Uncertain there, and apprehensive of the papal or imperial influence, he betook himself to France, whose monarch was the enemy of all from whom he might anticipate danger. Here, then, he seems for a short time to have believed himself safe; but if the demand of the emperor or the duke were known to be of no avail with the king of France, it was also not to be disguised that the condition of that ill-governed kingdom was most favourable to the commission of private crime; and Lorenzino soon discovered that his life was there in incessant and imminent danger. Once more he returned therefore to Venice; not, most probably, with the hope of safety, but in the belief that there at least less danger was to be encountered among a people who still pretended to retain the republican forms, and boasted the enjoyment of republican laws. Here, indeed, if the sin of Lorenzino had been one to be forgiven, he might hope to escape from the consequences of his attachment, feigned or real as it might be, to the principles of liberty and civil equality. Yet here, in his comparative security, the dagger of Cosimo reached him; he fell, with his uncle Soderini, murdered by order of the duke of Tuscany, at the age of only thirty-two, A. D. 1547, ten years after the death of his victim, the tyrant Alexander.

From the moment of this consummation of Cosimo's eager desires, the history of Florence ceases to offer any thing in illustration of the principle which it was the peculiar object of this brief sketch of her revolutions to elucidate. She offers nothing but the violence of despotism, baseness, and intrigue; distinguishing her story in no wise from that of other nations, whose

history is that of their princes, and whose vicissitudes, though pregnant often with the material of romance, are destitute of instruction for the student of political science. By degrees, and by adherence to the line of conduct and policy by which we have seen him subdue to his rule the city and citizens of Florence, Cosimo succeeded in extending his authority over all the states and cities of Tuscany; Arezzo, which had revolted from the Florentines when the common interests of Tuscany required a union of feeling for the common defence, and had then been flattered by the common enemy with the promise of freedom, was the first against which his resistless ambition directed its aim; Siena, where the last friends of Italian liberty had assembled for the ultimate effort of despair, next fell beneath his arms; till, having nothing left to conquer, nothing to despoil, and nothing to corrupt, he put a final seal to the fate of the republic, by assuming, under authority of the pope, the title of Cosimo I., Grand Duke of Tuscany; consolidating the government of the many cities which by independence had preserved their liberties, and which could only be united by the strong hand of a relentless tyranny. With this event the history of Florence is brought to an end, inasmuch as, from the moment of its occurrence, Florence herself, from an independent nation and a sovereign among nations, becomes but a part of an empire, while her history belongs to that of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany. With Cosimo the rule of the Medici commenced in the illustrious city, which for more than three centuries had taught the great lesson of political wisdom to Europe; and in the lapse of but one hundred years, that rule, extolled as it has been by affectation, ignorance, or servility, resulted, under another Cosimo, in the erasure of her name from the catalogue of nations.

APPENDIX.

Although the history of the latter portion of Cosimo's reign, as well as that of his successors, belongs, as has been stated, to the history of the grand dukes of Tuscany and not to that of Florence; yet, as the author thought it might not prove uninteresting to those who have traced with him the origin, decline, and fall of liberty in Tuscany, to witness the progress also of its slavery, he has added to his work the following brief but accurate summary from the history of Florence, which forms a portion of that most voluminous of English compilations, "The Universal History."

"Cosmo's authority being established, he wanted to marry his predecessor's widow; but the emperor, her father, for reasons of state, gave her to the duke of *Parma*, by whom she had the famous *Alexander Farnese*, who succeeded his father. *Cosmo*, therefore, married *Eleanora de Toledo*, daughter to the duke of *Alva*, viceroy of *Naples*, and he ever after persevered in his attachment to the imperialists. A private treaty had been made at *Leghorn* between *Charles* and *Cosmo*, by which the former agreed, upon the reduction of *Sienna*, to give it up to the latter, by way of indemnification for the great expenses which he and the house of *Medici* had been at in the service of the house of *Austria*. *Charles* did not reign long enough to make good his bargain with *Cosmo;* but his son and successor, *Philip* II. punctually performed it the first year of his reign, by resigning to him all his right and title to the *Siennese*, in consideration of the attachment of the house of *Medici* to that of *Austria*, and to indemnify *Cosmo* for the expenses of the war. This rendered him the most powerful prince in *Italy*, and he employed all his force and interest in supporting the house of *Austria*. Amongst other marks of his regard for that family, he instituted the order of the knights of St. *Stephen*. The original design of those knights was to serve against the piratical states of *Barbary*, who, about the year 1554, infested the coasts of *Italy*. *Philip* II. of *Spain*, having, about the year 1562, transferred all the district of *Sienna* to *Cosmo*, excepting that chain of garrisons which is now called *Strao de gli Presidii*, lying upon the coasts of *Tuscany*, the knights of St. *Stephen*, who were by that time a regular institution, were

employed to defend them, and allowed a noble palace and church for their residence at *Pisa*, which they still possess, though the order is now greatly decayed. *Cosmo*, during his life-time, escaped many dangerous conspiracies, which were formed against his life by the *Florentines*, who could not forget that they were once free, and that under him they were slaves with gilded chains. His first wife, already mentioned, was highly serviceable to him at the court of *Spain*, and contributed greatly to the glory of his fortunes; but though he had many children, it cannot be said that he was happy in his progeny.

"The names of two of *Cosmo's* sons were *John* and *Garcias*, or *Garcia*. The former, when young, was made a cardinal, through his father's interest; but never could conciliate to himself the affection or friendship of his brother *Garcia*, who was known to be of a furious vindictive disposition. One day the two brothers, while at hunting, found themselves alone in following the chace, far removed from all their attendants; and *Garcia* took that opportunity of quarrelling with his brother, whom he stabbed to the heart with his dagger. He then rejoined his company, without discovering in his countenance or manner the smallest emotion, as if any thing extraordinary had happened. The cardinal's horse, however, returning without his rider, the company, by tracing back the prints of his hoofs, discovered the place where *John* lay murdered. His body being carried to *Florence*, the grand duke, his father, ordered that the circumstance of his being murdered should be concealed; and gave out, that his son died of an apoplectic fit while he was hunting. He then ordered the dead body to be conveyed into an inner apartment, and sending for *Garcia*, to whose malignant disposition he was no stranger, he taxed him with the murder. The youth denied it at first with great warmth, and in the strongest manner; but being introduced into the room where the body lay, it is said to have bled (very possibly by chance) at his approach. He then threw himself at his father's feet, and confessed the charge. The father, who had resolved on the part he was to act, solemnly desired his son to prepare for death; adding, that he ought to account it a happiness that he was about to lose that life, of which his crime had rendered him unworthy, by no other hand than that of him who gave it. He then plucked out of its sheath the dagger with which *Garcia* had murdered the cardinal, and which still hung by his side, and plunging it into his bosom, he fell dead by his brother's body. This dreadful catastrophe happened in 1562, when the cardinal was no more than eighteen, and *Garcia* fifteen years of age. The father ordered the facts to be concealed; and all, but they from whom it could not be concealed, believed that the two brothers died of a pestilential distemper, which then raged in *Florence*. To give this report authenticity, both bodies were buried with great pomp, and a funeral oration was pronounced over that

of *Garcia.* The tragedy, however, proved fatal to the mother, who was so affected with the death of her two sons, that she survived them but a few days. As to *Cosmo* himself, in all other respects but his family afflictions, he was the most fortunate prince of his age; and, after living in the greatest glory and happiness, he died in 1574, in the thirty-eighth year of his reign, and the fifty-fifth of his age

"Cosmo, the first great duke, was succeeded by his son *Francis* I. who married *Joanna*, or *Jane*, daughter of the emperor *Ferdinand* I. by whom he had eleven children; but the males all died young, and the females were incapable of succession. His daughter, *Maria de Medici*, became queen of *France* by marrying *Henry* IV. The misfortunes which befel her, by her disagreement with her son, were in a great measure owing to two *Florentine* favourites, whom she carried with her into *France*, the marechal *d'Ancre* and his wife. Upon the death of the great duchess *Jane*, who was daughter, sister, aunt, and niece to emperors, *Francis* fell in love with a *Venetian* lady of the house of *Capello*, who was the widow of a gentleman of the house of *Salviati.* Having declared his intention to marry her, the senate, out of regard to her father's family, declared her the daughter of their republic, and made her a present of a ducal crown. *Francis* lived nine years with this lady, who is celebrated for her beauty; but little of importance happened to *Florence*, or to *Tuscany*, under his government. He died in 1587, and was succeeded by his brother *Ferdinand* I. who was a cardinal; but resigned his hat when he was fifty-two years of age. He married the princess *Christina*, daughter to *Charles* II. duke of *Lorrain.* He had by her almost as numerous a progeny as his brother; but only two of his sons survived him, of whom the elder, *Cosmo*, was his successor; and the younger, *Charles*, came to the highest preferments in the church. The most distinguished occurrence in the reign of *Ferdinand* was the vast magnificence with which he celebrated the nuptials between his niece *Mary* and the *French* king in 1600, who had sent him a procuration for that purpose. No expenses were spared on this occasion; and the representation of one comedy is said to have cost him sixty thousand crowns. He died in the year 1609, and was succeeded by his son *Cosmo* II. who married *Magdalen* of *Austria*, sister to the emperor *Ferdinand* II. By her he had three daughters, and four sons; of whom the eldest, *Ferdinand*, succeeded him; and the two next were cardinals. *Cosmo* II. was succeeded by *Ferdinand* II. who was a prince of a more active disposition than any of his three immediate predecessors. The disputes about the succession to *Mantua* reviving, he interposed with his uncle the emperor *Ferdinand* II. and procured the suspension of the ban of the empire. which was about to have been pronounced against the duke of *Nevers*, who had strong pretensions upon that succession in right

of blood. He married *Victoire de la Rovere*, daughter to the last duke of *Urbino*, by whom he had two sons, *Cosmo* III. and *Francis Maria*, afterwards a cardinal, and died in the year 1670.

"Cosmo III. in the year 1661, married *Margaret Louisa* of *Orleans*, daughter to *Gaston* duke of *Orleans*, brother to *Lewis* XIII. Alliances with the court of *France*, which was at that time in the height of its splendour, were courted by all the inferior *Roman* catholic princes in *Europe*, as it entitled them to the friendship of the house of *Bourbon*. *Cosmo*, however, could not have made a more unfortunate match, as a husband: he was entirely under the direction of his mother, the grand duchess dowager, one of the most severe and austere ladies in *Italy;* while, on the other hand, her daughter-in-law, having been bred up in all the gaiety and licentiousness of the *French* court, and attended by a numerous retinue of servants of the same cast, paid very little regard to the remonstrances of her mother-in-law upon the levity of her behaviour; and even presumed, upon the greatness of her birth, to give law to the duke her husband. There seems, however, to have been nothing criminal in the conduct of the young grand duchess, but her disagreement with the manners of her husband and her mother-in-law, which had spread the gloom of devotion and formality over all the *Florentine* court. She resembled him, however, in one particular, that she encouraged men of sense and genius. While she was at *Florence*, she heard that the famous abbot *Siri*, who was a monk of *St. Benedict*, in the abbey of *St. George* at *Venice*, had been banished that city, on a strict prosecution, only for having spoken slightingly of the republic. The abbot, repairing to *Florence*, was presented to the grand duchess, and she recommended him to his most christian majesty, who made him his historiographer. But her love of learning, however, could not procure agreement between her husband and her, they being, in other respects, directly the reverse of each other in temper and disposition. The great duchess dowager, continuing still to have the ascendency over her son, persuaded him to interpose his authority, to prevail with his wife to conform herself to the *Italian* manners; but neither love nor authority made any impression upon the duchess: and though she had brought the duke two sons, *Ferdinand* and *John Gaston*, and a princess, *Mary Magdalen*, afterwards married to *John William* of *Neubourg*, elector *Palatine*, daily quarrels happened between her and the great duke; till, at last, they separated, and she returned to *Paris*, where she was allowed an appointment agreeable to her rank, and which she enjoyed to the day of her death. Though this separation gave disgust to the pride of his most christian majesty, yet he had at that time political reasons for not resenting it otherwise than by sending instructions to the marquis *du Pré*, his ambassador at *Florence*, to apply to the great duke, and to endeavour to effect a reconciliation, as also to insist upon

three points. The first was, that the grand duke should, by inviting her to return to *Florence*, take back his wife; the second, that he should pay her debts, which, it seems, she had contracted to a large amount; and thirdly, that, when she should return, she should have the same power in the management of public affairs that the duke allowed to his mother. *Cosmo* answered, with great firmness, that, as to the first request, he was ready at any time to receive his wife, if she should please to return to him; but that her separating from him being entirely the result of her own choice, and without his participation, he would make no advances towards inviting her to return. As to the second article, he answered, that, while she lived with him, he had always maintained her according to her birth and station; and that, since their separation, he had ordered her appointments to be punctually paid her, and therefore did not think himself obliged to discharge those debts which she had contracted through extravagance and want of economy. As to the last article, he said, that, as soon as his wife had given as strong proofs of her attachment to his interest as his mother had done, she should enjoy the same authority in public affairs.

"The marquis endeavoured to shake *Cosmo's* resolution on those heads, by proposing, on the part of his master, another match between his eldest son and another princess of the blood of *France*, in order to renew the good correspondence between his crown and the house of *Medici*; but the duke, who was heartily disgusted with *French* princesses, civilly declined the honour of the alliance, under pretence that his son was too young to think of marrying. Notwithstanding this, the young prince soon after married the princess *Violante Beatrice* of *Bavaria*, a family that was then entirely in the imperial interest, the elector himself being that very year general of the emperor's army upon the *Upper Rhine*; and prince *Clement* of *Bavaria*, his brother, who had been chosen the year before elector to *Cologne*, having rejected all terms of accommodation with his most Christian majesty. The match of the grand prince into the house of *Bavaria*, together with the league of *Augsbourg*, in which *Cosmo* became a party, discouraged his most Christian majesty from any farther advances towards the court of *Florence*; and in the year 1697, when the reputation of the *French* monarchy and arms began to decline, his eldest son having no issue, he married, on the 2d of *July*, his second son *John Gaston*, who succeeded him, to the princess *Anna Maria Francisca* of *Saxe Lawenbourg*, widow of *Philip William* count palatine of the *Rhine*. This lady, besides the splendour of her birth, had great pretensions to her father's dominions, and was, in her own right, actually possessed of a vast fortune. Her father, *Julius Francis* of *Saxe-Lawenbourg*, had died September 29, 1699; but his succession was disputed with his daughter by the houses of *Saxony* and *Amhalt Brunswic*;

the first, in right of a reciprocal family compact between the elector of *Saxony* and the last duke; and the latter, in right of blood and alliances; while both pretended that a female descendant was incapable of succeeding to that duchy. *John Gaston* brought the affair before the imperial courts of judicature, and took a journey to *Germany*, where he not only carried on the process, but managed the great estates that fell to his wife in *Bohemia*, by the indisputed rights of heritage from her father. As to the law process, several precedents were produced, to prove that the estates in question were inheritable by women as well as men; but the forms of the imperial courts retarding the decision, he returned, after a long stay in *Germany*, to *Florence*.

"Neither of the two sons of *Cosmo* III. having male issue, and there being but little probability of their having any, the great duke's brother, *Francis Maria* of *Medici*, being of a vigorous constitution, some years after was applied to by the court of *Vienna* to resign the purple, to which he had been raised by pope *Innocent* XI. in 1686. to qualify himself for marriage. It was generally thought that the imperial court would have bestowed upon him one of the archduchess's daughters, sister to the emperor *Joseph;* and it is certain, that the house of *Medici* was so much in favour at the court of *Vienna*, that, in the year 1699, the reigning great duke of *Tuscany* obtained from the emperor the title of *Royal Highness*, the same having been before conferred on the duke of *Lorrain*.

"Cosmo III. in his own person, kept up the greatest shew of devotion of any prince in *Europe*. In his court and attendance his economy was next to parsimonious; but he repaired every night to the church of the *Annonciada* in *Florence*, and assisted at the litanies, which were there sung with the best music in *Italy*. He was at great pains to bring religious persons to his court, and to recommend them to the pope, who generally bestowed upon them some ecclesiastical preferment.

"Every one knows, or has heard of the holy handkerchief, which is preserved in the church of *St. Peter* at *Rome*, and which is said to be impressed with the picture of our Saviour's face, as he was going to his crucifixion. The veneration in which this relic is held is such, that when it is exposed, which is only on very solemn occasions, the people can behold it only at a great distance, and none have the privilege of exhibiting it but the canons of *St. Peter's*. *Cosmo*, however, was smitten with so extravagant a fit of devotion, that he employed all his interest with his holiness to have a nearer view of, and to touch, the handkerchief; but was informed, that he could not be gratified, because of the anathemas and fulminations that lie against every man who shall mount the tribunal of the holy relics, or presume to touch them, unless he is a canon of *St. Peter's:* he was even told by his holiness, that it was an indulgence the pontifical power itself could not grant.

After great consultation, however, his holiness fell upon an expedient that gratified his friend in his darling passion. The grand duke being then a widower, the pope ordained and declared him a canon of *St. Peter's*; and his royal highness, in a purple habit, and a surplice on his shoulders, having assisted at the brief which declared him a priest, was conducted to the tribunal, where he had the pleasure of touching and handling the holy handkerchief, with the other relics; and he bestowed his benediction, at the same time, upon seventy thousand spectators then present. But this was not the only piece of religious foppery that his royal highness was guilty of on this occasion. Upon his holiness presenting him with a few toys and relics, the duke gave two hundred pistoles to the bearers, and sent the pope presents to the amount of a large sum in jewels and money. Happening to pray before an altar in a church were his holiness arrived, he crawled upon his kness to the pontifical chair; and when the pope desired him to rise, "Permit," said he, "the grand duke of *Tuscany* to adore the vicar of *Christ* with that veneration which is due to him."

"His royal highness, however, during his residence at *Rome*, went only by the name of count *Pitigliano*, which exposed him sometimes to unforeseen adventures. While he was one day on his knees in church, a lady, whose husband had been banished out of *Tuscany*, placed herself by him, and applied to him, as count *Pitigliano*, for his good offices with the great duke to repeal the sentence of her husband's banishment, which he very obligingly promised her. At another time a courtezan threw herself at his feet, and, pretending to be penitent, the great duke gave her five hundred crowns to enable her to enter into a monastery.

"Upon the death of the king of *Spain*, and the succession of the duke of *Anjou* to that crown, the grand duke of *Tuscany* secretly resolved to take part with *France*; but so as to give no umbrage, if possible, to the imperialists. The remaining history of the life of *Cosmo* III. relates only to his private affairs.

"By the great economy he observed in his court and palace he had amassed so much money, that he was looked upon to be the richest prince in christendom; but his parsimony subjected him to many affronts from the *Florentines*, who did not fail sometimes to reproach him with the original meanness of his family: his friends, however, excused him, on account of his being obliged to maintain a court for his son, and another for his brother, and because of the vast sums he expended upon learning and learned men. When young he had made a visit to the *English* court, in the reign of *Charles* II.; but though he always professed a great friendship for the family of *Stuart*, yet we do not find that he was very liberal in contributing towards the efforts made for replacing king *James* on the throne of *Great Britain*, though often

applied to for that purpose by the cardinal *d'Este*, and the other friends of that family; nay, by the pope himself, for whom he had so great a veneration. He affected, however, to be the head and patron of all the *Roman* Catholics in *Great Britain;* and he exerted all his interest with foreign courts in their service. Being a complete politician, his success in this was incredible; and it was primarily owing to him that the Papists met with such indulgences as they did, even after the accession of *George* I. to the crown of *Great Britain.* His great study was chemistry; and his friends could not oblige him more than by sending for medicines prepared in his laboratory by himself. He entertained at his court the best physicians he could find, and they were consulted all over *Europe;* and being courted by all the *European* princes in his time, he may be said to have been in every respect happy, but in the melancholy prospect of his son, from whom he had no hopes of issue, being the last of his family. This consideration rendered him indifferent as to all the stipulations preceding the quadruple alliance in 1718, by the fifth article of which, the duchies of *Tuscany*, *Parma*, and *Placentia*, were to be accounted for ever as male fiefs of the empire, and were to descend, in default of male heirs, to the queen of *Spain's* eldest son.

"Cosmo III. did not long survive this destination of his dominions, for he died the most aged prince in christendom in 1723. He was succeeded by his son *Gaston*, whose character and manner of life greatly resembled that of his father. In the year 1731 the great duke, who had conceived an invincible aversion to the house of *Austria*, together with his sister, not only ratified all the stipulations with regard to the succession of his dominions, but in consequence of this new treaty, Don *Carlos* was invited to *Florence*, there to be educated. Even the emperor at last agreed to the introduction of *Spanish* troops into the duchy of *Tuscany;* and this secured the succession of Don *Carlos.* It is certain, however, that her Catholic majesty, by this time, had projected the conquest of *Naples* and *Sicily* for her eldest son.

"The great duke of *Tuscany*, while those matters were in agitation, was so much decayed in person and intellects, that he took little or no concern in them; and did not even make any remonstrances against the imperial court, who ordered a body of troops to move towards his dominions, in the beginning of the winter of 1736, to oblige the *Spaniards* to evacuate his dominions, which they accordingly did. He died in *July* 1737, and the duke of *Lorrain* immediately took possession of his dominions. The queen of *Spain*, notwithstanding her eldest son was then king of *Naples* and *Sicily*, could not bear the thoughts of so noble an acquisition as that of the great duchy of *Tuscany* being torn from her family, and endeavoured to engage, but without any effect, the court of *Great Britain* to assist her in recovering it for her son the duke of *Parma*, by offering to engage her husband to

relinquish all pretensions to *Gibraltar* and *Port-mahon*; and to give the *British* nation satisfaction with regard to the *American* differences subsisting between its government and *Spain*.

"But as no power in *Europe* could be jealous of that duke being master of *Tuscany*, and as such an engagement might have occasioned a fresh war, her proposal was rejected by the *British* court. Since the accession of the duke of *Lorrain*, now emperor of *Germany*, to the great duchy of *Tuscany*, the *Florentines* have made no figure in the affairs of *Italy*; but the court of *Vienna* has taken some steps towards rendering it, in time, a very comfortable appenage for the younger branches of the *Lorrain*, or rather the *Austrian* family. In the year 1753 it was resolved, that for the future the entire military force of the great duchy, should consist of only three regiments of foot, and one of dragoons of five hundred men. To support this establishment, a *French* company offered to farm the revenues of the duchy. But his imperial majesty rejected the proposal, and fixed upon another company, composed of his own subjects, to manage the revenues under the direction of M. *Richard*, a gentleman of *Lorrain*. By this new institution, the finances of the duchy were divided into twenty shares, one half of which his imperial majesty reserved to himself. By those, and other frugal measures, the emperor was enabled to erect a college for the improvement of agriculture at *Florence*; a science to which the *Florentines* are peculiarly adapted; and in the year 1755, he raised another regiment of dragoons, and regimented his militia. The duchy is now governed by a council of regency, a military board, and other officers of state, who have made many excellent regulations, by which, during the war now raging in *Germany*, his imperial majesty has been enabled to draw many useful recruits from the grand duchy of *Tuscany*, which have done him great service in his armies."

END OF VOL. II.

It is considered unnecessary to append an ERRATA to these volumes, the errors being for the most part such as the reader will naturally correct. In a few instances, however, and especially in the first volume, some mistakes have occurred, which arose in the correcting of the Proofs: as in page 110, line 7; page 113, line 20; and page 265, line 26; where the words *its*, *it*, and *her*, should have been *her*, *they*, and *their*. The reader will easily perceive the manner in which these inaccuracies have arisen; and it is believed that they occur in very few instances other than those specified above.